Celebrating Rumi

Ali Dashti

Translated from Persian
by
Sayeh Dashti, Ph.D.

Ali and Sayeh Dashti share much more than a common family name: they share in the wilderness of their land and blood. This wilderness that first embroiled Ali Dashti in the calamities of his era and that today compels Sayeh Dashti to recast minds. He used his inimitable flare for words in the intrigues of the politics of the day and she, through the light of her own diversity and insight into the depths of human nature, revives the essence of antiquity and the simple but rich philosophy of the East in the dynamic and elusive human psychology of all those she touches. Psychology in the garbs of modernism holding above it a halo of nostalgia for the past. How is it possible to explain the soul or the turbulence of a mind in ecstasy? We can hear as well as feel these explanations through the chants of Rumi from seven centuries ago. These chants were exquisitely rendered into a comparative interpretation by Ali Dashti some 50 years ago and have now been given a unique scholarly perspective by an international intellectual humanist. Dr. Sayeh Dashti has produced this translation at this juncture in mankind's history where boundaries no longer exist but only oceans full of waves dreamt of by Rumi.

Dr. Sayeh Dashti is a practicing behavioral therapist in Iran. She received her higher educational degrees from institutions in the United States of America.

Dear Livia,
Happy New Year.
Saeed Sami
Tehran Dec 2010.

A Voyage Through Divan-e Shams

Celebrating Rumi

Ali Dashti

Translated from Farsi By: Sayeh Dashti

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A Voyage Through Divan-e Shams 1958, 7 printings
In the Realm of Saadi 1959, 6 printings
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A Moment with Khayyam 1962, 6 printings
The Castle of Innovation 1972, 5 printings
Wise Men Opposing Wisdom 1975, 3 printings
Self Confidence (A translation from Arabic) 1926, 12 printings
Navamis-e Roohieh Tatavor Melal 1921, 4 printings
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In the Territory of the Sufis, 1974, 3 printings
A Glance at Saaeb 1976, 3 printings
A Picture of Nasser Khosrow 1975, 3 printings
Fifty Five Years, 1975, 2 printings

About Dashti

In Iranian literature, Ali Dashti praises the leap towards absolute perfection. He also praises talking music—poetry.

In his middle age, this wise man, statesman, and diplomat chose to introduce Moalana Jallal ud Din Mohammad Rumi's unique sample of poetry, the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* to lovers of Persian poetry.

Ali Dashti was a member of a noble Iranian family. He was born in 1894 in the city of Karbala, south of Baghdad where his father was a student of theology. Dashti's father put forth much effort in the upbringing of his first son. Having gained a substantial wealth of knowledge, Dashti migrated to Iran at the age of 18.

Ali Dashti first went to Fars in the south of Iran where his roots were; and in a few years he moved to Tehran, the capital city of Iran. There, with no fear and no hesitation he started to write and to speak. He then established the very earnest newspaper called the *Red Horizon*, through which people got to know him, his ideas, and his goals.

He was soon elected by the people to represent them in parliament and on this path he advanced to positions of minister, ambassador and senator.

Parallel to his successful political career, Ali Dashti's career as a writer was bright and fruitful. He was a dominant and daring journalist, a noble novelist, a true nationalist and, finally, an admirer and an advocate of the greatest Iranian classic poets such as Molana, Hafez and Saadi.

Dashti died in Tehran in 1982, at the age of 88.

Introduction by the Translator

Every individual is entitled to a suitable name. I had the fortune of being named Sayeh (shadow) after one of the most beautiful books written by my great uncle, Ali Dashti.

Three years ago I made a commitment to myself to reread all the books written by Ali Dashti—this time as an adult. *A Voyage Through Divan-e Shams* was the second book I chose to read from the list of the books he authored.

As I read this book, I found myself translating parts of the book and sending them to my children who live abroad. Their reaction was one of enthusiasm and awe. They kept asking for more and soon I found myself translating page after page of this incredible book.

I recognized the challenge. But, when I asked my family, who also bares the name Dashti, for permission to publish this book, every one of my family members honored me by telling me that I was the only one who was qualified to do this task.

Every moment I have spent working on this translation has been the most joyful time of my life. Our family gatherings became discussion sessions about every detail of this book. I felt as if all the experiences of my life had now found a purpose. I was to introduce this incredible man, Ali Dashti, to the world.

In the translation, I have made special effort not to interfere with the original writing of Ali Dashti. However, I chose to add footnotes in order to introduce a name or a concept to the English speaking readers. References are also provided to the original poems in Farsi. The ghazals from the *Divan-e Shams* are introduced numbered. The references to these ghazals are abbreviated and are shown as (D.S., Gh#...). Other poems, either from the *Mathnavi*, by Molana or by other poets are noted at the bottom of each poem.

I have also written a short introduction introducing Ali Dashti and a separate part introducing Molana Jallal ud Din Mohammad Rumi.

Sayeh Dashti, Ph. D.

In Commemoration of the 700th Anniversary of Molana Jallal ud Din Mohammad (Rumi)

This book is a hesitant manifestation of my own mind and my own perceptions of the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* a reflection of the indistinct images I have of the holy face of Jallal ud Din Mohammad. You will find here neither the results of historical or literary research, nor an account of the growth of Sufism or the explosive thoughts of the Gnostics such as normally proceed from the hands of skilled and tolerant researchers. This book came about, as it were, by accident, and from the various scattered efforts I have made. It is not at all an attempt to produce a comprehensive book about Rumi.

In February of 1955, the publishing company, Saafi Ali Shah, which was about to publish more than fifteen thousand verses from Rumi's collection of ghazals (odes) known as the *Divan-e Shams,* asked me to write something to introduce this work. They did not have to insist very much. I considered it my duty to do so. For that reason I wrote a piece about the *Divan-e Shams*. It was published as an introduction to the Saafi Ali Shah book, and also in the magazine, *Tehran Mosavar,* the newspaper, *Toloo,* the literary magazine, *Yaghma,* and other publications. This demonstrates the interest of the literary community, and intellectuals in general, in Jallal ud Din Mohammad Rumi. A few months later, in the summer of 1955, Zabihola Saafa, whom I respect highly, asked me to write an introduction to a book that was being put together by UNESCO in honor of Rumi. Since, at that time, I was still engaged in writing about Hafez, I declined apologetically, and UNESCO settled for the same introduction I had written for Saafi Ali Shah. By the beginning of that fall, when my book, *A Portrait of Hafez,* was ready to be published, and I was free, I started thinking about this subject. It puzzled me that the work of such a great poet as Molana had not been presented suitably to the Iranian literary community. I still had time to produce something for the UNESCO book, so I set to work on an article at once. I finished the article, but as time went on, there was no news of the UNESCO book. It was supposed to have been published by December 5th, 1955, but by early January of the next

year there was still no news. In a country where procrastination, negligence, and carelessness in the vital affairs of all institutions is very common, how could we expect an organization that has no obligations or accountability to worry about keeping a schedule? Especially when it had the good excuse of its authors' tardiness in delivering their written articles.

Sina Publishing Company, which is especially interested in publishing my books, believed that I should not wait for UNESCO, but that I should pay my moral and spiritual debt to Molana independently. They suggested collecting the various articles I had written into a book. It made sense, especially since what I had prepared for UNESCO was more than thirty pages long.

Now that this book has been put together and is being published, I must emphasize one point to my readers: inevitably, and in order to show what the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* really is about, we must look at this book in a very organized manner. To this end, the different aspects of Molana's thinking should be analyzed, and various microfiche be prepared in the Western style. Also, in order to be more complete and in order to bring out the vast soul of Molana, the same thing should be done for the *Mathnavi,* which is a separate ocean with its own waves, storms, ups and downs, life and movement. All kinds of wonders, rarities, and unique jewels are hidden inside the *Mathnavi*; however, I sincerely admit that this task is beyond my diminishing powers. Even when I do have the energy, it is never concentrated and is always scattered over many different matters. But this weakness cannot stop me from voicing my deepest respect for one of the most important poets in the world.

Pour the ocean into a
pitcher—
how much water can it hold?
Only a pitcher-full of water.

(The First Book of the Mathnavi)

Ali Dashti
February 2, 1956

About Molana Jallal ud Din Mohammad Rumi

In order to know Molana and his poetry, we should understand the atmosphere of the Iranian society of his day. At the time of Molana's birth, Iran was a vast civilization with major cities such as Nishapur, Tus and Shiraz, and had military schools, libraries, civic organizations, roads for caravans, stations, and places for travelers to stay. At the same time, the Mongol tribes had settled in the heart of Asia, and were getting stronger through unification. The Mongols considered Iran a powerful neighbor and a major civilization. They dreamed of having business and cultural contacts with Iran, but the fact remained that they were barbaric tribes and could become very hostile if provoked in any way. For that reason, it was necessary for Iran to be very cautious with them and avoid confrontation.

On the other side of Iran, to the west, was the Baghdad government of Iraq. As always, these two powers, Iran and Iraq, did not have a good relationship—not good enough for them to unite against a common enemy. Indeed, unfortunately, at about that time they went to war. The Mongols took advantage of the situation and attacked Iran. They burned one city after another, slaughtering the civilians. King Mohammad Kharazmshah fled to Abscoon Island, and his son could not hold out against the Mongols.

Before the calamity swept over the entire country, some of the educated and wealthy people left Iran and immigrated to different parts of the continent. Many went to India, some to Iraq, and others to Asia Minor (Turkey). Turkey hosted many literary men and Gnostics from Iran, such as Nadjm ud Din Razi, Fakhr ud Din Iraqi, Tormazi, and, most importantly, Baha ul Lah Walad and his son Molana. The exact date when Molana and his father entered the city of Konya in Turkey is not known. According to the narration by Sultan Walad, they must have entered Konya in 1220.

Molana Jallal ud Din Mohammad Rumi was born on September 30, 1207 in the city of Balkh in the Persian Empire. His father was Baha ul Lah Walad, a very well known and well-respected Sheik from the school of Kobravi (the followers of Sheik

Kobravi), and bore the title, "King of Ulema," meaning a very high authority in religious matters.

The creator of the *Mathnavi* and the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* was a man called Mohammad with the nickname of Jallal ud Din. His friends and followers called him Molana. It has been written that "molana" was a common noun used as a term of respect. Only after it was given to Rumi did "Molana" become a proper noun. (It is also said that Shams called him Molana.) Since he lived in Turkey, he was also known as Rumi or "Roman" Molana. At this time Asia Minor belonged to the Latin West. Molana's tomb, that of his father, and of his family, are also in the city of Konya in Turkey. In the West, today, he is known as Rumi, and only specialists in Iran and in the history of the Middle East who have read his books in the original language are aware of the name Jallal ud Din Mohammad Molana.

Molana was educated in the most famous schools in Halab and Damascus. When he returned to Konya (after about seven years) he was already a prominent theologian, very much respected by the religious community and by the philosophers and Gnostics. On Monday, December 18, 1244, Shams-e Tabrizi arrived in Konya. He was a tall man with a bony face, with an angry yet caring expression. He was sad-looking, like someone who had suffered a great deal. He was about sixty years old.

Shams ud Din Mohammad, son of Ali, son of Malekdad, was a learned man who had traveled throughout the Middle East in search of a person who could "endure" his company. He journeyed from Tabriz to Baghdad and from there to Damascus, and finally to Konya. The day he arrived in Konya, Shams had no idea that he would find the one he was searching for. For some time, he stayed in silent seclusion and did not reveal his identity. He worked in a small booth at a sugar dealership. We do not know how many days it was before he met Molana. There are many stories about their meeting, one account of which is given in this book.

Molana and Shams spent many months together in seclusion, without any contact with the outside world. This ecstatic connection raised many concerns in the religious community. For that reason, Shams disappeared suddenly. His absence affected the great master deeply. Molana sent his son to bring Shams back.

When he returned, Shams lived in Molana's home and married a young girl from his family. Once more, their long conversations made people around them uncomfortable and jealous. This resulted in Shams's withdrawal from Konya once again, this time with no return. It has been said that Molana's oldest son, Alladin, arranged Shams's disappearance.

When he realized that Shams had disappeared, Molana himself went to search for him but never found him. After Shams's disappearance, Molana found another friend and companion, Saladin Zarkub, a goldsmith. Molana addressed many of his poems to Saladin, and, when Saladin died, Husam Chelebi, one of Molana's scribes, became his closest companion. Molana claimed that Husam was the motivation and source behind the composition of the *Mathnavi.* For the last twelve years of his life, Molana worked on this fantastic collection of spiritual couplets which, when completed, comprised six volumes.

Molana Jallal ud Din Mohammad Rumi died on the seventeenth day of December 1273.

I

The Music of the Divan-e Shams

Once human forces surpass the threshold of balance, they approach the infinite.

When love and hate, greed and jealousy, stinginess and generosity, willfulness and sacrifice, good and evil, the beautiful and the grotesque—pass the ordinary, they touch the boundless and the limitless.

The man of God who sees the Absolute Being in every small, insignificant particle and the hopeless man who has lost all his faith and sees life as a non-existing mirage, both have a share in infinity.

Romain Rolland

Shams-e Tabrizi moved my soul.
Thereafter, I was a harp
playing the tune of love.

(D. S., Gh # 1787)

What is poetry? What is music? These rays of light, which uninterruptedly and constantly pour on us in the dark of the night—where do they come from?

These indefinite dimensions, that even the unlimited flight of the imagination is incapable of approaching—to what place do they all vanish? How do we perceive this "meaning" without a starting point and without an end; this volatility that yields no subjective concept of time, which is as unimaginable as the location of the infinite and which takes our helpless mind to a dark and impenetrable amazement?

These glowing sparks are each a sun bigger and brighter than our sun which gives life and warmth to the planet earth: the more human knowledge of science unfolds, the more is added to their numbers. The poet Nezami believed that the luminous objects spread through immeasurable space are each, "a separate world and a separate sky."[1] They are eternal and extend as far as

---

[1] Nezami, Hakim Nezami Ganjavi (1157 - 1221), Iranian poet, author of *Khamseh*.

place and time—these burning hells that in the nights of our planet earth paint the sky so beautifully. How have they arisen? Why do they exist? Are they stationary or are they moving towards a particular goal? If so, where? Where are they darkened? Why were they kindled, only now to lose their light? What replaces them? How can we come out of this deep and impenetrable darkness, which haunts our vision?

Indeed, when faced with this incredible phenomenon, this complex and incomprehensible world, we human beings, with our indecorous minds and reasoning, are helpless and incompetent, limited to mere guessing and childish estimations. Our ability to know and understand is incapacitated.

Isn't it likely that this storm of astonishment and awe raged in the soul of Jallal ud Din Mohammad?

Whenever I encounter Rumi in the context of *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* questions surround me. What does he want? What is he in search of? What is he saying? What has he felt? This unstoppable commotion is the reflection of what storm?

One night as I was listening to a musical instrument, I felt poetry and imagery pouring out of its lifeless strings. It was poetry that did not fit within the frame of words or imagination which bring the narrow space of logic and perception to an impasse: the passion of an immortal soul, the commotion of a secretive, complicated being, the whisper of an everlasting humanity, apart from individuality.

The shadow of a tranquil sleep came over me. My eyes closed; I began flying on the wings of music. "I" was drawn out; I was far, far from that humble room, reaching the white clouds,

reaching the quilt of the moonlight, going even further and higher. I was close to the infinitely dimensioned pathways of the innumerable stars.

My worldly pains and dreams had vanished; "the one" whom I had hidden within me was released. He moved close to that "it," that vague and unlimited concept, which is implicit in the universe. Our solar system with all its grandeur, in comparison, is nothing but a tiny drop in the sea. This hidden self was captured by dreams. In the storms, winds and waves it started to dance.

I no longer felt the texture or the weight of my body. Everything, even the space and place in which the body belongs, was forgotten. Whatever was framed or defined became indistinct; the line distinguishing individual things had vanished. I encountered the Absolute Being, the Being separate from the shadows of matter, that lucid and untouchable soul that gives light to the sun and grants luminosity to the stars.

In complete sobriety one cannot describe the colorful waves of drunkenness. I cannot at this moment rightly describe what I felt. Maybe that condition was a kind of separation from my senses. Conscious cerebration, which attaches itself to different matters in order to comprehend them, was not present then. The senses, which are the doorways to all variety of physical stimuli, were replaced by a high and somehow vague sensation. The burning truth—that everything goes towards destruction and that existence has no beginning and no end; that the life-giving sun is a flaming hell that incinerates all that approaches it; that the beautiful beaming planet Saturn, much

like the planet earth, is a handful of frozen dirt—all this had disappeared along with the horrifying realities of science. Only the world of dreams remained, the same world in which Molana flew. An indescribable vagueness like an undulating universe of colors and clouds enveloped "him." Complex and secret good news—a certain rapture—surrounded the "one" who had risen from my being and was floating in the skies.

You are still invisible—
you have not seen your own face.
One dawn, like the sun you will evolve—
from within.

(D. S., Gh # 2840)

Is it not true that poetry itself wants to ameliorate reality by covering it with golden dust? It wants to sweeten our desire which has been embittered by our own weakness. It wants to adjust our soul to the harsh realities of life. Poetry wants to show what we see in our dreams, where the improbable becomes actual, rough obstacles become smooth, the rigid alternation of pain and pleasure finds surcease. We reach an ecstasy without pain, a beauty bereft of hideousness.

If you free yourself from time,
from place
like time you pass,
like place you grow resistant.

(D. S., Gh # 2862)

Not all poems can sate our tired and thirsty souls. We

want images to pull us out of what we have fallen into, to take us to unknown peaks, to unlimited dreams that can throw us beyond mere subjects and meanings and bring us close to the realm of Platonic ideas. We want poetry that can lead us beyond this choking prison of helplessness and weakness towards a place where our high-aspiring soul is struggling to free itself, and to which it cannot find an entrance. We want poetry that can take us to a space larger, and vaster and freer even perhaps to an absolute freedom. Perhaps more than in any other poet, the desire for such freedom is found in the unsettled soul of Molana.

When we travel in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* it is as if we have entered the orbit of the far-away stars—a world higher and more inclusive—vaster than the atmosphere surrounding our stony planet. We enter a place where the stars are living beings and are talking to us. We come close to that Soul which encompasses the infinite space. It is no wonder, for Molana has reached for that absolute maturity. He has flown to the peak of beauty, towards boundlessness, towards the place of eternity, towards the reality of the Being who warms the universe.

Rumi's music is rare and different from that other collections of poetry. When I speak of this music, I do not only mean the rare rhythms and measures of Molana's ghazals (odes). According to many interpretations many of these ghazals came out of Molana's mouth on the nights of Samaa (whirling) as improvisations. It is even said that he spun around a vertical pole and recited poetry spontaneously to the music of instruments playing.

Furuzanfar, in his book, *Kulliat-e Shams,* writes, "Molana knew music and played the Robab (harp); he even composed music for this instrument. Understanding music, which is the principal of rhythm, provided Molana with the musical background enabling him to play with rhythm in his poetry more than any other poet."[2]

According to Furuzanfar, "The thirty-five-hundred ghazals of Molana are in fifty-five different measures. No other poet has ever extended rhythm this far." All the traditional measures that exist in earlier poetry, also exist in *Divan-e Shams.* As Shams-e Ghaise writes, 'Some abandoned measures show up again in *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* and they are made even better and have been improved in their rhythm...'"[3]

Furuzanfar is an experienced researcher and author, with a wealth of knowledge derived from various sources related to Molana. However, his opinion about the music in *Divan-e Shams* is also a result of his own experience of the poetry. He quotes from reliable sources in regard to Molana's knowledge of music and his ability to play the harp. But there is more to Molana's poetry than that. Sometimes a person who studies music learns its techniques and, through practice and becoming familiar with the instrument, is able to move his fingers smoothly up and down the strings and make music. But his soul

---

[2] Furuzanfar, B.Z., *Kolliat -e Shams* 8 Vols. Tehran: Amir Kabir Press, (1957-1966).

[3] Razi, Shams-e Ghaise. Shams ud Din Ghaise-e Razi. Literary man of the 7th century Hejira. He left Iran at the time of the Mongol attack (617 Hejira). Five years later he returned to Shiraz in Iran.

lacks passion. He is placid in his being and far from "internal uproar." He is only demonstrating what he or she has learned.

Many professional musicians are like this, unlike some composers for whom music has become the language of their unconscious mind—in addition to possessing good technique and skill in performing what they have learned. These composers employ their experienced fingers to interpret the storm within. The true source of real music, which has turned into bubbling springs with the aid of art and style, exists in their soul. Similarly, in the soul of Jallal ud Din Mohammad music erupted quite apart from his ability to play an instrument. In his soul an everlasting source of music was always in action. All this rhythm and melody, this variety and innovation in rhythm, this warmth and passion which constantly pour out of his poems, the uncommon interpretations and the balanced waves of indescribable phenomena in his expressive language—all are indications of the presence of music in his soul:

> I learned to play the harp.
> His love taught me how.
> No one knows how I feel.
> The harp moans in my heart.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 741)

It is as if this couplet was telling us that Molana Jallal ud Din who was a teacher and a jurisprudent (a judge versed in the Mohammedan traditions) had the urge to play a musical instrument upon encountering Shams-e Tabrizi. This encounter had ignited a fire in his soul. He began to Samaa—to practice

"whirling." On the nights of Samaa he experienced feelings he had never felt before, not even while reading the Holy Book and not through any other experience. Therefore the abundant variety of rhythmic measures in *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* is not unexpected.

Due to their rhythmic nature, it can be assumed that many of these ghazals were recited along with music, as were the following ghazals and many others in *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi:*

A light from my heart, beauty from your face,
my wings and feathers, your precious virtues.

(D. S., Gh # 2253)

Be with me, my idol; bring your heart to mine.
If I do not sacrifice, complain all you want.

(D. S., Gh # 2095)

You are the God of virtues—you have what God has.
You are not just one; you are a thousand beings inside.

(D. S., Gh # 3247)

Thank God today, my heart is worse than yesterday—
today thrown into the bargain, my heart has a different color.

(D. S., Gh # 1341)

I want you, my beloved, not to sleep tonight.
For the love of God, do not sleep tonight!

(D. S., Gh # 3358)

You are above all men, say it, say it—
you are the king of the war zone—say it, say it!

(D. S., Gh # 2246)

My heart, my heart—my heart next to you.
Your face, your face—your face with your glory.
Your breath, your breath, your life-giving breath.
Your wine, your wine—your golden delight.
Idol, idol, if you want my life,
I give, I give, my head and my soul. I swear to that.

(D. S., Gh # 2254)

There are many ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams* where the final statement of a given verse is repeated, in some cases, many times:

Free from deceit, madness, madness
came through the heart of fire-butterfly, butterfly-
Hey! My desires-come out and show yourselves!
My purpose, my dream-come out, show yourselves!

(D. S., Gh # 2131)

Oh my heart's desires, come, come, come, come—
Oh my purpose and dream, come, come, come, come.
Do not mention the road—do not, do not.
You are the path, you are my home-come, come, come,
come.

(D. S., Gh # 156)

In most ghazals, a single rhyming word is iterated

throughout the poem. But Rumi writes ghazals where each line has its own rhyming element. This might not be a single word but an entire phrase, or even complex vocals:

> When I think of God—héle lábbe lábbe lábbom.
> My body is naked—héle lábbe lábbe lábbom.
> I am neither a king nor a ruler—have no greed for wealth or for glory
> Neither a captive nor a convert—héle lábbe lábbe lábbom.
>
> (Attributed to Molana)

Sometimes the element is repeated throughout the whole ghazal:

> I have returned, I have returned
> this madness of loving.
> I have come burning, have come with music
> this madness of loving.
> I am crazy, I am crazy. I've become a legend
> in the land of loving.
> A pearl in every shell,
> I have become
> this madness of loving.
> The world is filled with me, while I myself am empty
> from plenty, from density.
> Sometimes only as a beginner, sometimes all the way
> this madness of loving.
>
> (Attributed to Molana)

As in the ghazal with "héle lábbe lábbe lábbom," the words at the end of some verses do not have meanings and only represent a sound i.e., the syllables function the way musicians sometimes use syllables like "tan tan," "tan tanam," "lan lan,"

"ghom ghom," etc. to define their rhythms. There are many other such examples that show how Molana's poetry is mixed with music.

Again, my purpose in discussing the "music" of the *Divan-e Shams* is not only to show the rhymes and the musical character of the words used, for in this art Saadi and Hafez are unsurpassed. My point is that Jallal ud Din, irrespective of his limited use of vocabulary and the absence of eloquent language in many of his ghazals, has been able to express his inner storm. With his use of sounds, he has accomplished what music does free from the limitations of words.

There are many occasions when we cannot verbalize what we feel; when the pen, the fingers, and the mind—which are what make words functional—are frustrated. Music opens up a world to us that we cannot describe. Some people do attempt to describe a piece of music. The result is usually poor and childish. We do not know what went on inside Beethoven's dark and stormy mind as he composed. Lightning must have struck and erupted in the shape of musical notes. These are positive matters of fact with an objective nature, but which are not subject to rules and regulations of any kind. Therefore, the effect of music on different people varies. Not everyone is affected the same way, not everyone understands the same thing. Each person is affected depending on his talent, his dreams, his way of thinking.

Music is a key that operates the machinery of our feelings, but all people are crippled when describing its quality. Molana also thinks this:

Each who approached me,
did so out of his own fantasy.
No one was searching within me,
for me.

(The First Book of the Mathnavi)

We still do not know the secret of music. No other product of the human mind is able to penetrate into the dark, undefined depths of our sleeping mind, as music does. No one has yet explained the association between music and our unknown supplications. Perhaps this is how music can take us from the known to the unknown, from the limited to the unlimited, and from matter to meaning: by entering the silent, non-interpretable points of our soul and talking to them; by lifting us from our ego to a higher self, introducing us to meanings that we feel but cannot verbalize.

The same quality is hidden in the *Divan-e Shams*. I hear music in it, and it has been long since I have enjoyed another book of such quality. That is why I usually take it with me on my journeys. I take it especially when traveling abroad where one can feel great freedom and great imprisonment at the same time.

For me it is filled with a tranquilizing quality. It has a hallucinatory and dream-provoking character. It is cheerful yet gentle, calm, and yielding a civilized kind of joy, a joy mixed with a mysterious happiness. It releases me from the fatigue of daily life and my boring inner dialogues with myself.

The *Divan-e Shams* is a sea. Its calm is beautiful and its excitement is troublesome. Like the sea, it is full of waves and

movements. Like the sea, it is a panorama of colors; it is green, it is blue, it is purple and the color of water lilies. Like the sea, it is the mirror of the sky and the stars, the sun and the moon and the designs of the dusk. Like the sea it is filled with movement and life. Under its smooth and calm surface, there is a world of pulsation and struggling.

The *Divan-e Shams* is not a book of poetry, it is the uproar of a stormy sea. The *Divan-e Shams* is the reflection of an uneasy soul filled with excitement and saturated with passion and charm.

The first characteristic of Jallal ud Din that distinguishes him as a poet from other poets is that Molana is not trying to make poetry. He simply wants to communicate his vague feelings. He is a speechless dreamer who wants to tell his dreams to a deaf audience. He is struggling in an ocean and his struggle emerges as beautiful and melodic words:

> All roaring, all waves I am—
> I am going towards the sea, and that sea is you.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 1611)

The rhythmic balance and the rhymes are qualities that are secondary in his work. Due to a unique musical quality in his soul, we hear *its* uproar. We hear the winds, the waves, and the mystical whisper of the forests.

Molana does not search for rhyme. Inevitably he follows the rhythm along and when it feels necessary he creates rhyme.

> I thought of rhyming. My beloved said:

Don't think of rhyming. Only think of me!
What are words?
They are not worth your mind.
What are sounds?
But a thorn on an orchard wall.
I will throw away letters, sounds and speech
that I might speak with you
without these three.
The breath I hide from all men, now I share with you.
You are the secret of life.

(The First Book of the Mathnavi)

Something *other* has preoccupied him. There is something *other* in his uneasy soul that manifests as poetry. That is why words and measures fall so short. He reacts with frustration to his own expression:

Rhyme and the order of words—let the flood take them!
They are as shells, shells only—to the pulp of the poet's mind.
I am free of this verse and this ghazal—Oh the king of eternal Divan
rhyme, rhyme, rhyme—it slays me so!

(D. S., Gh # 38)

The attraction of the spiritual has taken Jallal ud Din beyond the techniques of poetry and the art of essay writing. In his language, poetry is a flood of meanings and unexplainable concepts.

As blood boils in my body—I color it with poetry.

(D. S., Gh # 2807)

For that matter, there are times when in a disappointing

struggle, the flood of utterance comes out of his mouth almost without concern for eloquence or rhyme at all. In writing in this way, he becomes the victim of his own inner storm:

By God, I am silent,
yet an uproar erupts from my soul
in spite of me.

(D. S., Gh # 984)

I am about to scream. The sound comes out of the Pleiades.
When you carved the reed and fashioned me from the reed
bed, the land of non-existence,
you made me with two ends, just like a flute.
One end was my heart, the other was your mouth.
You filled me with sugar and wine, and, drunk with joy,
my reed came out with its sound, Oh lala la—
God knows if the mountains
drink the same wine,
—break into puddles
from imposing your presence.

(D. S., Gh # 3399)

If we look carefully we might see in this poetry the sign of music written in a time of selflessness, because in this condition a window opens between the poet's unconscious mind and ourselves, disclosing a vast dreamy world where the strict laws of nature grow pale:

The domain, where love brought pain

Bu Hanifa[4] and Shafeii[5] did not teach.

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

Anything but rapture and madness on this path
is only a stranger.

(The Sixth Book of the Mathnavi)

What assists him in opening this world is his power to use the suggestive nature of the words with purity and apart from any artificiality. His sentences are lifted directly from his soul. The satisfying force, which is inherent in his words, is more powerful than in any other poet.

The book of a Sufi is not written in words-
it is a pure heart only, white like snow.
From a great man of knowledge
comes what the pen writes.
What is the art of the Sufi? Enlightened steps only

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

Throughout this book we repeatedly come to this point. Let me end this chapter with a few more verses from the *Divan-e Shams*:

If my wondering heart is released, there
one less heart

---

[4] Bu Hanifa, (Abu Hanifa). One of the four leaders of orthodox Islam in the time of Mohammad.

[5] Shafeii, Imam Abu Abdollah Mohammad-Ebne-Edrees. The founder of the leading sect of the Mohammedan religion.

suffering in this world.
May the sun of your love shine
until it spreads to all the stars.
The sun that reached Mount Sinai
shattered that mountain in pieces.
Each piece of pebble, turned to shinning jewel.
The rays reached mother Mary's tent.
The infant began to talk.

(D. S., Gh # 2901)

II

The First Encounter With Molana

Loving impatiently is our secret.
The business is ours, because He is ours.
The time of the old merchants has passed.
I am new. This market now is mine.
Newborn spring renews the world
and is the soul of the garden,
but it only exists beneath our feet.
Plato is weak. Galen, the physician, is seriously ill.
If you are a seeker, know—
this is fire, not my word!
When we taste this wine—
the town will be empty of wise men.
As for my ghazals—
if one comes without me, that is a good one.
For this music comes
with or without our harp.

(D. S., Gh # 429)

A tale is like fruit, my brother—
its moral is the pulp.

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

My first encounter with Jallal ud Din Mohammad was through the *Mathnavi* in my early youth. In that period my thinking was not yet formed, and I had not yet tasted the colorful feast springing from the Iranian mind which our ancestors have displayed for us. I did not even have knowledge of Iranian poetry or literature—the brightest element of Iranian civilization after the conquest of Arabs.

I used to read (better say "leaf through") the *Mathnavi* in search of stories and tales. My state of ignorance about the actual content of this masterpiece was like that of a naive farm boy plowing with a cow, being suddenly introduced to an ultra-modern mechanized harvester.

I shall never forget my experience when reading the unique beginning of the *Mathnavi*. It is still engraved in my memory after all these years. Its rhythm and its unsuspected warmth still runs through my veins. When I first read it, it was as if I had tasted wine for the first time or smoked my first cigarette. A certain unusual and pleasant feebleness overcame every tissue of my body.

Sometimes in a foreign country we see a scene for the first time, but even though it is strange and new, it somehow

seems familiar—as if we had seen it before and liked it, or as if, in seeing it, we had found a lost piece of ourselves. Had we seen it before in our dreams, or perhaps in our unconscious imaginings? Or could it be that our undiscovered desires had anticipated its image? Perhaps, rather, this "who" this "me," presently occupying this body, at a different time had visited that landscape and left part of himself there. There are some people who, in a momentary flash, have the capacity to separate from themselves—to separate from their visible and limited being—and catch a glimpse of themselves as they might have been in another epoch, in another world; and this feeling, this sudden seizure, makes them believe in reincarnation.

The first page of the *Mathnavi* created such a feeling in me—or rather, let us say it created an unconscious feeling. It possessed a music that took me deep inside an indescribable soul, and there another melody took over and took me even further, a music unlike any music I had ever heard before.

Over the forty-six years that have passed since that moment, I have dealt extensively with Iranian poetry. Familiarity with the major scholars and poets of Iran has made me very selective and hard to please. But I must admit that reading the first page of the *Mathnavi* still has freshness and nobility, a sensitivity and charm sweeter than any other in this vast and complicated body of literature.

This incredible collection of couplets is filled with musical verses that take us to the top of the skies; the waves of its charm conduct our soul to the sea of love; yet its originality lies within its innovative technique, the variety of its thoughts

and metaphors.

Jallal ud Din Mohammad is best known for his grand work, the *Mathnavi,* because this book contains his vast knowledge and his unique insight. We can call the *Mathnavi* an educational book. It is the collection of teachings that Jallal ud Din committed to writing towards the end of his life. His scribe Husam Chelebi is said to have insisted that Molana should leave a book for his followers.

The *Mathnavi* is a deep sea in which all kinds of valuable jewels of thought can be found. It offers our mind verses from the Koran and other poems, interpretations, science, Sufism, philosophy, tales, and allegories—so much that one comes to assume that all the counsel, thought, and points of wisdom from that period of Islamic history are covered in this book. The saying in the Koran that "There is nothing wet nor dry that is not included in the great book of God." can justly be applied to this book as well.

It is the comprehensiveness and the warmth of Molana's language that overshadowed books such as *Hadighe* of Sanai, *Mantegh Al Tair* of Attar and *Golshan-e Raz* of Shabestari. *Mathnavi*, hence has become the foremost guide for seekers of truth and for those who are searching for the deep and vast world of spirituality.

To avoid confusion, I would like to add that in spite of all its popularity with the philosophers and men of knowledge, the *Mathnavi* is only given one tenth of the recognition it deserves. There are many illusive points with veiled logic that remains unclear—and the ground is not yet prepared for people

who want to take a voyage through it.

The *Mathnavi* deserves to be interpreted, discussed and analyzed in many different ways. Its variety of subjects should be categorized. Metaphors and allegories should be distinguished and separately made available. Many interpretations should be written regarding its more complicated matters. Finally, the findings should be organized such that each individual, according to his or her own understanding, gets to know Molana and the true value of this great work.

Now, the *Divan-e Shams* is a completely different story. It is a notebook on love—the love of beauty, love of the Absolute Being, a leap towards absolute perfection, and a flight to eternity. This is where its music comes from.

The *Divan-e Shams* is a fireball of passion, the shadow of an unsettled soul, yet created by the same strong mind and the product of the same skillful thought that created the *Mathnavi*. The difference is that in *Divan-e Shams* the image of the spiritual leader is dim, while the image of the enraptured, selfless seeker is most apparent.

The concealed difference between the *Mathnavi* and the *Divan-e Shams* creates an impression that these two books were written under two different conditions. In the *Mathnavi*, Jallal ud Din is an awakened person while in the *Divan-e Shams* he seems to have lost consciousness. In the *Mathnavi,* a man of religion, a man of knowledge, and an interpreter of the laws of religion is speaking to the world in the language of Gnosticism. In the *Divan-e Shams* he has gone into "ascension;" he is speaking within himself, unaware of others.

The source of belief in this great man of God is different in each one of these books. In the *Mathnavi* Rumi is a follower. He quotes the written laws of Islam. Ultimately, of course, the metaphors, tales, philosophical and logical observations come from his searching soul. In the *Divan-e Shams,* Rumi is an appointed prophet though without any law; he is Jeremiah, but instead of curses and imprecations he brings good news and spreads hope.

The *Mathnavi* is written with wisdom and for the purpose of guidance. That is why it is not free of the rules and traditions of its time. The Jallal ud Din Mohammad who appears in the *Mathnavi* is on and from this earth. Writing within the framework of divine living, he verbalizes the vast teachings of Islam. Inevitably, his own magnifying perception and his unlimited imagination present a special version of Islam. For this reason, at times he loses control and flies to "a place of no abode" and approaches "what does not come to the imagination." But then he returns and confines himself again to explaining some issues using traditional reasoning.

The uneasiness and vacillation which we often detect regarding certain matters in the *Mathnavi*, but much less frequently in the *Divan-e Shams,* such as reduction to metaphor and the advent of miracles, is due to the existence of these two different conditions. Due to the flight of his imagination he is fatalistic but not like Ashaaries[1] who rely on the quoted

[1] Ashaaries. A branch of Islam, followers of Abu al Hassan Ali Ebne Ishmael Ashaari.

reasoning of others. No, he is a fatalist because he perceives this world as an image, a shadow. The shadow is a subordinate clause, it pertains to form, and it is an accidental and an attributive concept where no will can enter. The stars are reflected on the smooth surface of the water, but there are no stars in the water:

> In metallurgy, he is Azar, Abraham's father.
> I am the beloved object.
> Whatever he fashions, that, I will become.
> If he makes a goblet of me, a goblet I shall be,
> and if forges a sword—a sword.
> If he makes a stream of me, water will flow from me,
> and if he decides on fire, I'll learn how to twist and turn.
> If rain is what I am to become, I shall give rise to the crops;
> and if he makes me an arrow, I will sink into someone's flesh.
> If he turns me into a snake, I'll shed poison;
> and if he makes me a beloved, love and kindness will flow from me.
> If he makes sugar of me, sweet as sugar I will be;
> and if he makes me bitter, I will be filled with hate.
> I am like a pen in your fingers.
> In the line of duty, I do not hesitate to execute his command.
>
> *(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)*

On the other hand, fatalism is the opposite of the canonical laws: if the human subject has no will, then the chastisement and spiritual reward that all religions are based upon is discredited. In this sharp and clear perception, the dark or irrational opinion of the Ashaaries has no place. The notion that the human being has no will yet is still subject to punishment and reward. To believe that God is free and just in

punishing human beings for what they have done unwillingly does not make sense. This is where Molana struggles, and by way of examples and tales and approximations he tries to portray the human being as an actor with a will who is naturally accountable:

No wise man will punish a piece of rock—no one ever
blames it.
In wisdom, predestination is disgraced
for the believer in destiny denies all that he feels.
The entire world is indicating "will"

He orders us around: "do this, do that"
All throughout the Koran
are imprecations and threats.
Who has ever seen
marble being subject to command?

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

If a beam breaks off the ceiling—
if it falls on you and injures you,
can you be angry at the wood?
Can you be the captive of hatred?
If all that you had were washed away in the flood,
could wisdom grow hostile with that?
If the wind blows away your scarf,
will you scowl at the wind?
This anger in you is the sign of will:
Make no excuses. There is no destiny.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

When I say that tomorrow I'll do this or that,
I am assuming that I have a will.
That's how it is.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

When a camel rider whips the camel,
that camel gets back at the rider.
It is not the stick the camel's angry at—
this is how the camel knows about the will.
If an animal's mind knows how it is,
shame on you, Oh human!
Don't pretend that you know nothing of it.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

As you can see, Molana's logic is not consistent throughout these ghazals. Where a man says, "tomorrow I'll do this and that," this is not the basis for his will: it itself is based on his assumption that he has a will. A camel or a dog might sometimes bite a stick or a rock for hitting it. Besides—the camel's understanding or instinct does not correspond to human beings' way of thinking.

But the *Divan-e Shams* is more homogeneous than the above confusion makes it seem. There are fewer swings between opposites, and Jallal ud Din does not struggle to make out the human being as possessing a will:

I am but a riddle in His hands:
He turns me around in his hands.
He riddles. That is what He does.

I riddle. This is what I do.

(D. S., Gh # 1802)

You put the belief in the heart of a believer.
You color the vague in the heart of the doubter.

(D. S., Gh # 2474)

In between fingers of love
like a pen
helpless and under compulsion
I'll write scroll after scroll.
Not knowing what I write
like the scale and the measuring tape
I bargain—
but I don't know the business.

(D. S., Gh # 1487)

Affecting my soul, is what he does best.
Breaking vows is what he can do.
He knows all the tricks.
He vibrates the molecules of creation.
There lives another inside me—all my aggression belongs to him.
If water is boiling, know that there is fire.
I'm not brandishing rocks, not fighting anyone.
I am no threat, for I'm happy like a flowerbed.
So my rage comes from somewhere else—
it is of another world, this rage.
This side of the world, that side of the world—
I am sitting at the peak.

He who sits here should not speak.
Be deaf and dumb—enough of what you have said.
Be quiet! Bite your tongue! You have told the secret.
(D. S., Gh # 1789)

In reference to the subject of miracles, Molana's thought seems to fluctuate. In his clear and positive way of thinking there is no room for the impossible. The principles of the universe are preexistent and cannot be violated, because they are the creation of an eternal will. Therefore it is irrational to think that these principles can be modified for an insignificant, valueless cause such as satisfying or convincing the ignorant at any specific time. For if they are violated at any given time, there is no reason why they should not be violated at other times or in other cases. And if they are violated at any time and in any case, the principles will not be eternal law and the eternal will or decree will be meaningless.

The one who considers disregarding these principles for the purpose of compassion should rather seek wiser and more natural causes, so that a light is shed on dark minds, turning ignorant Bu Jahl[2] into Salman-e Farsi[3].

Under this blue veil, He has given means, ways and customs,

[2] "Bu Jahl" is the given name to Ebne Al Hanzalieh. He was the opponent of Mohammad and harassed the Prophet and the Moslems. He is a symbol of hatred and aggression among Moslems.

[3] Salman-e Farsi was a Persian who joined the companionship of the prophet Mohammad. He was born in Isfahan and died in 657.

which leads the seekers directly up to Him.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

From the entire body of Jallal ud Din Mohammad's writings available to us, either the writings that have been reported to us by others (which of course may be mixed with superstition) or the subject matters which have been drawn out of Molana's two books, it is apparent that his style of thinking is not based on mere obedience; rather, it grows from a certain belief, much the same as the belief of the companions of Mohammad or the disciples of Jesus Christ. His clear and uncontaminated mind, his vast knowledge of the secrets of religion and his views about revelation and the reason for the appearance of the prophets, keeps him away from believing in miracles as a prerequisite for prophecy:

What brings about belief
cannot be their miracles.
Who they are, and that they are of our kind
is what draws us to them.

(The First Book of the Mathnavi)

Nevertheless, sometimes Molana struggles to explain miracles and to somehow coordinate them with the law of cause and effect. On this topic his positive and openly philosophical mind is evident, because he does not consider miracles as the basis of the universe. Unlike the religious conformists, he is not committed to disregarding the law of karma. Instead, he explains: that whatever seems to you to be out of the natural order or as a reaction without a preceding action, is because you

do not have sufficient knowledge to see cause and effect together. They are hidden from your field of vision. You only see the violation of the surface:

Observe a cause, observe the other.
Don't observe the cause alone.
If you have vision—drill in the cause.
Go to see it—see it from beyond.
(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

Most of the time, things go as planned.
Upon occasion, however, power goes beyond that.
You who are stubborn about causes—
Hold on a moment! Don't lose faith.
The Creator will do as He will.
The absolute power will tear apart all that you've planned.
(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

This "absolute power" who tears apart the cause, referred to in these two verses of the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* does not dismiss all the other causes. Nature continues to revolve and the relationship of cause and effect will always hold:

As long as water leads, this water mill will turn.
How naive you are when you tell it, "Stop, my wheat is done."
The water does its job—it works in spite of you—
your wheat,
or your crop.

For as long as water leads with its pulse
my life flows on. That is the secret.

(D. S., Gh # 1802)

Somehow in the *Mathnavi,* it is as if Molana cannot free himself from the ideas of the Islamic society simply because the religious community had departed from how things were at the time of Mohammad—the time of glory, simplicity and genuine faith which existed at the time of his prophecy and continued until his death. As long as the Islamic community was filled with belief and sacrifice, this issue did not surface. In the Koran there is not a mention or a trace of performing miracles such as occurs later. The only exceptions are when the Koran tells tales of past prophets. Even in regards to the naive and ignorant mob that resist Mohammad's invitation and ask for all kinds of miracles before they might take his invitation seriously, there are very clear verses in the Koran:

God said: Is this Prophet any different from a human being?
Is he not but a human who has been given a celestial revelation?

(Koran, Verse 93 of Sura 17)

The interesting point is that the further we are from Mohammad's prophecy, the more common the performance of miracles in the Islamic society. Depending on the distance in time from Mohammad 's life, the importance of performing miracles increases to the point that in Molana's day it is apparently a necessary condition for prophecy. Even

philosophical minded scholars such as Imam Fakhr Razi[4] are not exempt from the consensus.

More surprising is that the performing of miracles was not limited to the prophets. Sufis too claimed certain miraculous deeds for their leaders such as Ba Yazeed Bastami[5], Abraham Adham[6] and Sheik Abu Saiid Abu Al Khair[7]; also the Shiites used miracles to claim greatness for their jurisconsults.

Based on these considerations, a person cannot help but assume that during the writing of the *Mathnavi,* Jallal ud Din was influenced to a great degree by the public opinion of his time.

Altogether, he has a different character in the *Mathnavi* than the person who wrote the *Divan-e Shams. Divan-e Shams* is written in complete selflessness and rapture, free from the society's point of view.

One of the reasons for the popularity of the *Mathnavi,* indeed, is the fact that it was written for the people and its content is closer to the popular mind:

> Water boils, boils to steam.
> The air in the mist gets cold
> and now there's water again.
> This happens beyond cause, beyond any laws.

---

[4] Fakhr Razi (1166-1228) was born in the city of Ray and was a famous scholar and poet, also known as Imam Razi.

[5]Bastami, Ba Yazeed, Abu Yazeed, was a great Gnostic from Bastam. He died in 884.

[6] Adam, Abraham was an Iranian poet from Kashan. He was the author of *Ghamoos Al Alam* and lived most of his life in Baghdad. He died in 782.

[7] Sheik Abu Saiid Abu Al Khair (967-1048), Iranian Gnostic poet from Nishapur.

yet creation has created water
where there was none.
As a child, you saw only the cause!
And that's where you still are—in the dark
with effects whose cause you cannot see.
Thinking the way you do, under cover,
that's the way you want it to be.

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

But, in the *Divan-e Shams* we meet with Molana's soul, Jallal ud Din's wild emotions. We face his strong intuition—a blinding, overwhelming faculty where everything is forgotten—all common customs and beliefs, all reasoning and logic is gone; nothing is left but a reflection of this glory:

I am a mirror— a mirror
not a man of words
once your eyes turn to ears, you will see,
what I'm going through.

(D. S., Gh # 38)

The verses also show his boldness in comparison with the verses from the *Mathanawi* in support of miracles just mentioned.

Clap; clap both hands till dawn!
Clap, the beloved is dancing!
Tell me about what I know,
just you and I.
Cover it up with the name of God!

(D. S., Gh # 2340)

A gypsy, with no money, no legacy, no gold,
will become a thief, is it not so?
He steals and asks us:
I'm a gypsy. I've
no job and no vocation.
I'm hungry so I eat
off Moslem men.
Where else can I go for a meal?

(D. S., Gh # 1026)

Beauty at times is intertwined with the new and the noble; therefore, as soon as the novelty disappears, beauty fades away too. However, there is a kind of beauty, which does not decrease with time. It is as if its genuineness exempts it from time; it does not diminish in value no matter how often it is beheld. It is as if beyond the limited surface of things there is a world of vast potential that revives us from fatigue and gives to our thirsty souls rejuvenating waters. Such is the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* and maybe the reason its value has not yet been discovered is for this very fact. The *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* does not have an attractive surface—not attractive enough to grab the attention of common people. Comprehension of its extravagant characteristics requires training and patience. It requires the capacity and tolerance of curious minds who are not easily convinced, who are always seeking the novel, the rare, and the unusual—minds that with effort and searching are capable of enjoying hidden pleasures.

The fact that the complete *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* was only published in India and not in Iran until recently, supports this idea. Even though many mistakes and misprints exist in the

Indian edition, and though there are some ghazals that have found their way into the book but do not actually belong there, it is still the only complete *Divan-e Shams* available. The late Reza Gholi Khan Hedayat[8], author of *Majma Ul Fosaha,* published a selection from the *Divan-e Shams,* which until some twenty years ago, was the only published Iranian version. Many editions of this incredible book have gone to press. This shows how this precious work remained unknown in Iran.

In recent years, the University of Tehran commissioned famous researcher Badi Ul Zaman Furuzanfar to edit and publish in eight volumes the complete *Divan-e Shams.* He has worked from eleven ancient copies of the text and produced a book that is a trustworthy reference.

The fact that the *Divan-e Shams* remained unknown and unrecognized for so long in our very rich and powerful literature has special significance. It has driven me to reach certain conclusions and draw certain hypotheses, which I would like to share with readers. I have discovered something previously unknown, but since it might give me a chance to have a dialogue with readers, mentioning it in the following chapters might not be useless.

[8] Hedayat, Reza Gholi Khan, Was born in Tehran in 1215 and was a great poet from the Ghajar era. He was the head of Dar Ul Funoon School. He had many publications and collections of poetry. He is famous for his book about poets of Iran called *Majma Ul Fosaha* in two volumes.

III

Soulless Body

Preferring Words to Meaning

Heart—cloud.
Breast—roof.
Tongue—gutter.
Rain pours down from here.
Pure words that flow from hearts
through contaminated chests
will discredit the water.

(D. S., Gh # 402)

No more ghazals known only as words—
come listen to this one
straight from the soul—
no words.

(D. S., Gh # 1028)

I believe that poetry has lost its reality. Most of what we count as poetry is actually not that. Poetry in the public mind has been confounded with prose.

Poetry is a flowing phenomenon that exudes from the sensitive mind of an individual who feels uncommonly deeply and reacts uncommonly strongly to emotional stimulation. Someone who is swift to perceive beauty, and who deals with dreams and images, will also react more swiftly and sharply to good and evil. Finally, in such a soul, there are phantoms that ordinary people are unaware of. A poet pours out these reactions and passions in melodic words and balanced sentences. Thus beautiful poetry is created.

In distinguishing between a good poem and a bad one, the balance between meaning and verbal form and the balance between soul and body determine the value of a poem. Criteria such as these are unavoidable.

It is obvious that one cannot call just any poem a true one if these two basic kinds of balance are missing from it, yet certain unfortunate people put words in poetic meters, and naive readers call these balanced, rhythmic verbal structures poetry. We are not talking about poets who have somehow poured poetic meanings into attractive frames. We are concerned with those who have lost the balance between words and meanings.

The problem here is that there are competent writers,

who have a good vocabulary and whose work does show their talent and their skill. Nevertheless they somehow lack feeling and originality of thought. Their concepts are mere repetitions of ordinary concepts known by everyone. This class of poets whose members undoubtedly have a strong grasp of Farsi literature and Farsi vocabulary, and have taken the art of poetry to the peak of its eloquence—this class of poets is responsible for fostering poor judgment among the public. It is no wonder that the readers of such poets believe their eloquence signifies that they are great poets.

This misconception does not stop with misguided appreciation, but has the more damaging consequence of gradually increasing the emphasis placed on the mere use of words. The attention given to this aspect of poetry has diminished the value of other aspects to the extent that the literary community judges poems by their eloquence and verbal coherence and puts this class of poets on the top of the list.

There is no question that the power of the words chosen, and the quality of the meaning expressed, together form the basis of good poetry. If we, however, look at the subject matter differently and put these two on the same footing, or indeed, if there is to be a comparison between the two in regard to their role in making a true poem or in regard to their priority, then by all means the words themselves must be seen as the decorative and fanciful aspect of the poem and accorded secondary importance, whereas the meaning must be seen as intrinsic to the poem and accorded primary importance.

Words are means to reflect what is in our mind. What is of primary importance is whatever is in the mind. Eloquence has no other role than to communicate these thoughts in an accurate and complete manner.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that undoubtedly in poetry the words must be polished and refined and the composition of the words should be accomplished in a rhythmic

and melodic way. Beauty is beauty and it is admirable, but harmonious words and their rhythmic arrangements are the means and not the ends.

The actual purpose of any poem, or any work of prose or any oration for that matter, is to get the meaning across to other minds. The more dependable and honest the means is, the better this purpose is served. Therefore, eloquence and excellent language are not the purpose or the goal: they only serve as the means.

Unfortunately, over time, these two aspects of poetry have exchanged places, and the means have become the ends and the main goal has been forgotten. In other words, one pillar has been sacrificed for the other.

Due to this confusion, literature seems to have deviated from its original path. In order to correct this, it is necessary to contrast two opposing conditions of poetry. Consider, on the one hand, a mature, well-balanced poem, a poem devoid of any verbal defect, but empty also of feeling and thought. On the other hand, consider a poem, which is not perfect in composition and does not stand out for its eloquence, but is filled with passion and melancholy; where you can feel that the poet had something to say, that he had felt something and that he is now expressing it with poetry. Which one of the two would you label as a true poem? Is Onsoree[1] a poet or is Saaeb?[2]

If we do not have poor taste and if the decline of our powers of thinking has not disturbed our judgment, unquestionably we would prefer Saaeb to Onsoree. The title, "poet" more suits Saaeb even though he lacks the maturity and the strength of language that Onsoree possesses. This is because in the poetry of Saaeb we find much reflection, significant

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[1] Onsoree, Abul Qasim Hassan Ebne Ahmad. An Iranian poet, contemporary of Ferdowsi (Died 1053).

[2] Saaeb Tabrizi. A great Iranian poet (1607-1675), he created many collections of poetry, writing altogether some 120,000 verses.

content, an emotional flame and that unmistakable jewel which distinguishes an individual from an ordinary member of the crowd—the quality that distinguishes one who can truly be called a poet.

If we remove reflection and the manifestation of one's soul from poetry, what is left? A walnut without the kernel; an instrument without a tuner; a person without character and knowledge; a burned out lamp. Falling down the slippery slope of poor taste accounts for the true value of poetry remaining hidden and ignored.

Another factor contributing to the diminishment of literary excellence was the kings' practice of bestowing gifts on poets of the time who used their talent to eulogize them. There was a greater demand for eulogists than for poets with a real talent for true poetry. The true poet was ignored and remained unrecognized. The domain of poetry became the marching ground for flattery by the merely skillful.

When a selfish and powerful person in authority wishes to lavish gifts on his admirer, it is understandable. Obviously a dictator king would not pay much attention to a Hafez[3] or a Sanai. Their art, their thinking and their pride in their art were of no interest to him. Poets such as Anvari[4], Onsoree and Moeezi[5] were more readily equipped to pamper the king's self-admiration.

Still, what remains unexplained and saddening is the unjust opinion of the literary cognoscenti and critics who declare certain characters to be poets, though these writers have merely used their verbal abilities to lie and to flatter cruel

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[3] Hafez, Mohammad Shams ud Din (1320-1388). The great lyric poet of Iran. He was reputed to have known the Koran by heart.

[4] Anvari, Uheddin Mohammad (Died in 1187). A great poet of Iran. He was knowledgeable in most sciences and philosophy. He lived during the reign of Sultan Sanjar Ghazna.

[5] Moeezi, Amir (died 1140). An Iranian poet from Nishapur. He lived during Malek Shah's dynasty.

oppressors. In other words, these individuals have used their gifts, their literary powers, to introduce the evil and the ugly as the beautiful and the excellent. This fact alone goes directly against the goal and the reality of the art of poetry, for a true poet is someone whose soul is easily affected by good and evil, beauty and indecency. This over sensitivity differentiates a poet from the laity and puts him in the class of great thinkers and scholars.

Sometimes small considerations bring you face to face with a bitter reality. Such was my encounter a few years ago with Reza Gholi Hedayat's book, *Majma ul Fosaha*. This knowledgeable man, in writing biographies, has had to mention the names of most writers and has quoted some of their works, including some of the eulogists and their works. I have always wondered though, what made the late Hedayat quote all these exaggerated and unreal eulogies.

Farokhy[6] was one of the most tasteful eulogists and was a major poet during the Ghazna dynasty[7]. In the introduction to his work, Farokhy has marvelous descriptive verses about nature. Was it not possible for Hedayat to stop at that—to quote only the part that indeed can be called a poem?

We might be able to understand why he included works by Ghaani[8], Fath Ali Khan Sabaa[9] and others who wrote many eulogies in honor of the king and the dignitaries of the court, army officials and prominent members of society. These poets

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[6] Farokhy (Died 1051). Iranian poet, contemporary of Ferdowsi.

[7] Ghazna Dynasty. Ruled Iran beginning 1006. The first king was Saboktakin who overthrew the Samani Dynasty.

[8] Ghaani, Mirza Habibolah (1807-1853). Born in the city of Shiraz during the ruling of Fath Ali Khan Qajar. He wrote many books of poetry and prose.

[9] Sabaa, Fath Ali Khan (died in 1822). Known as Malek ul Shoara. He was born in Kashan during the reign of Fath Ali Khan Qajar. Fath Ali Khan Sabaa was known for his eulogies.

[10] Mahmud Ghazna. King of Ghazna, Saboktakin's son. He usurped his brother Ishmael, seized the throne, and conquered many neighboring lands and attacked India. He ruled Iran from 988 to 1042.

have not restrained themselves at all in their exaggerated praise and false flattery of the ruling class. The late Hedayat must have wanted to make himself a partner in their flattery. But what could have been his motive for including the entire collection of eulogies by Onsoree about King Mahmud,[10] and Farukhy's about Masud[11] and Anvari's on Sultan Sanjar[12]? Could it be that he believed all *that* to be poetry?

This bad taste and distance from true poetry more or less exists everywhere in criticism. However, I do not believe at any time—even in the period of Abbassides,[13] or the time of the decline of the Arabic poetry—that it has existed to this extent.

One of the reasons the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* has been ignored could be just that. Perhaps the balance between composition and meaning that exists in Hafez, Khayyam[14], Saadi[15], Ferdowsi[16], Nezami, Nasser Khosrow[17], Sanai and Attar[18], does not exist in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi.*

Jallal ud Din Mohammad is the opposite of those poets who have advanced in the use of words and composition yet have stayed behind in feelings and the essence of poetic

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[11] Masud of Ghazna. Mahmud's son. He ruled from 1019 to 1032 over some parts of Iran.

[12] Sultan Sanjar, Mohammad Kharazmshah. He was the last king of Seljuq Dynasty and ruled from 1133 to 1144.

[13] The Abbassides Dynasty. Ruled Iran from 750 to 1258. They claimed descent from Mohammad's uncle, Abbass.

[14] Khayyam, Omar Ebne Abraham (1048-1122). Celebrated Iranian poet and mathematician, renowned for his unique quatrains (Rubayyat).

[15] Saadi, Sheik Muslih Ud Din (1189-1291). Illustrious Iranian poet and moralist. Born in Shiraz, Iran. The book, *Kulliat-e Saadi*, which is a combination of prose (Bustan) and poetry (Golestan), is the most read book in Iranian literature.

[16] Ferdowsi, Hakim Abul Qasim Mansur (1557-1648), The great Iranian poet from city of Tus. He wrote the country's national epic, *The Shahnaameh* (The Book of Kings).

[17] Nasser Khosrow, (Hojat) 1004-1088). A great Iranian poet and writer. He was known for his elegies. He lived during the Ghazna Dynasty.

[18] Attar, Sheik Fariddedin (1162-1249). He is one of the greatest Gnostic poets of Iran. *Tazkarat Ul Olya*, is one of his books of prose. His collection of poems, *Mantegh Ul Tair*, is one of the masterpieces of poetry.

meaning.

The *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* is indeed very strong and powerful in meaning. It is certainly not poor in verbal composition, but the meanings are so powerful and overwhelming that they do not leave any room or opportunity for this great poet to refine his language.

When Rumi wants to express a notion, he brings examples to emphasize the subject. All his allegories are taken from daily life. Since his metaphors are intended to express his thematic purpose, he does not pay much attention to the way they are stated:

> Midstream, water flows,
> while near the banks it freezes.
> Midstream, water runs fast,
> while near the banks its motion is halted.
> Go—go faster now.
> If you don't want to depress us—go!
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2429)

> See the donkey, over burdened, shivering on the ice.
> He raises his head, looks up to the sky—"God show me a manger"
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2784)

> The house of God
> is impure
> with only a mouse,
> even a dead mouse.
> The same mouse who,
> panics with a mewing cat.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2457)

Obviously such poems, especially where the poet talks about the "mewing cat," or about depression, are not very eloquent, but Molana is free from these considerations.

A sensitive point in the *Divan-e Shams* is that one cannot

find any ghazals—not even one—which can be said to be a repetition of what others have said. There is nothing in any of them, which the poet has not felt on his own. It is as if an unknown secret is motivating him to compose. The dense clouds pregnant with electricity have collided and thunder is roaring. Thunder naturally does not have "tolerance," nor is it concerned with the melody or softness of its roar. In the language of Jallal ud Din, poetry is not the goal. His ultimate purpose is to bring out the things that go on in his over-occupied and stormy mind. This is apparent in the *Divan-e Shams* to the point that one assumes he must have written his poems in a state of oblivion.

When awake,
he is my conscience.
When asleep,
he takes my dream away.
When uttering poems,
he expands the rhythm in my mind.

(D. S., Gh # 2251)

In the state of rapture, when everything else is forgotten and all the rules and regulations of literature have disappeared, the poet has no grasp of himself, and certainly no consideration for the laws of literature.

Ultimately, Jallal ud Din's vast knowledge of the Farsi and Arabic languages, his large vocabulary, and more importantly, his possession of a spirit full of music and rhythm, all draw him towards composing ghazals that are rhythmical and full of music. Most of the time they also compare in eloquence and smoothness with the best:

My beautiful idol has returned—
the glory of now and tomorrow has returned.
In his eyes, I see my own bright eyes.
In his face, just what I want to see.
Who is knocking at our door?
The life of the world—

the desire for me—
Do not remove your shadow from my head—
do not take the chains off my feet.
Look deep into my eyes.
See the shine of the upside-down sea.

(D. S., Gh # 2115)

O my heart's comfort
you are so precious,
so light, so slim,
as good as Elias,[19]
as good as Khezr,[20]
better than Khezr's water—
the water of life.
You the life of the universe
Better, you are adorning this life.
As good as Korah's wealth[21]!
Better than the miraculous hands of Moses.
You are matter,
you are spirit,
like this world, you create such illusions.
More excitement,
more uproar,
more than a bloody duel.
The fabulous mountain
that surrounds the world—Mount Ghaaf—
has its brightness from your light.
You, the fabulous bird—Griffin—
why are you still hidden from our vision?

(D. S., Gh # 2709)

You are turning red,

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[19] Elias. A prophet, grandson of Noah and Khezr's brother. He joined Khezr in drinking the water of life and became immortal.

[20] Khezr. A prophet who trained Moses. It is said that he drank the water of life and became immortal to help travelers crossing by land.

[21] Korah (Died 1168). The son of one of Moses' wealthy cousins. He was jealous and stingy with his money. Moses denounced him and he lost all his riches.

you set fire to idols—
set the temple on fire.
Sitting, with flames all around you,
you laugh like a piece of gold on fire.
You are high,
you are drunk,
laughing
coming from the ruins of God.
Like fire you laugh
at the good, at evil too!
Your perfume runs wild in the air
like a gray horse
galloping in the air.
You are like the sun
smiling at the moon.
The autumn dried up the leaves, and the trees—
where do you come from? which garden?
From where,
smiling like the flowers
all wet and fresh?

(D. S., Gh # 2868)

O! moon,
you are the purpose
for all that turns up and down.
Do not do that to us—
don't turn me upside down!
Do not steal yourself from us
to give yourself to strangers.
Don't take your eyes away
to look at another,
Oh do not.

(D. S., Gh # 2054)

In love with me?
I will disgrace you.
Sell out all you have.
Build a thousand houses?
I'll leave you homeless in the world.
Not till I have turned you upside down,

will I allow things to look right.
I have poisoned you bitterly
Do not worry—
I will stuff you with sweet things yet.
Have I tied you to the world?
I have done it.
Now I can unbind you!
I am like Jesus Christ.
It is time to bring you back to life.
I'll make you a thousand songs.
Shams-e Tabrizi is in my heart now,
I will turn both worlds, inside and out.

(D. S., Gh # 1665)

Poems with such eloquence are not rare in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi.* But one thing we cannot deny is that this poetic work is not homogeneous regarding the elevation of its language. As far as flow and verbal coherence are concerned all the ghazals are not on the same footing. Nevertheless, if one did not know the following ghazals were from the *Divan-e Shams,* one would think that they were the ballads of Saadi, who is the leader in expressive language:

Today my love has not come,
my friend, my sweetheart,
has not come.
The flower in the garden of the heart.
tonight did not come.
Run wild to the desert like a gazelle—
our Tatar musk did not come.
The audience to our music did not come.
Do not stop playing now—
go on with the flute and daaf—
our calm and quiet has not come.
The One who gives divine wine to our soul;
the remedy for our hangover,
did not come.

(D. S., Gh # 711)

More novel still, is that many of the ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams* have the style of eulogies, or they are lyric poems and eulogies combined. Certainly the language is the language of ghazals, but you can hear the melody of the Khorasani style[22] of eulogy in the background. It somehow brings the dignity of Anvari, Farukhy, and Masud's eulogies to our mind. Again it has something more; I do not know what it is. His poetry is filled with passion, with joy, and rapture. Spiritual matters mix with poetic rhythm and the gentleness of eulogies:

To you, the player on my soul,
when you pick up the daaf—
play a special tune for me,
for my beloved comes.
When that beautiful idol
shows his face to us,
the moon comes down from above
to worship my love.
All the particles of the universe
make an appearance,
out of non-existence
to worship the sun.
Why are you mourning?
Why are you sad?
Did some monster take you—
take you away and capture you?
Run from the monster.
Take the wine of love
in the palm of your hand.
Play this tune again—
Jupiter, the auspicious planet,
comes down as is his duty
to help heal the broken heart.
Be quiet.
Watch in silence.

---

[22] Khorasani Style. A style of poetry in 4th century Hejira. It originated in the region of Khorasan.

This is where the canary
is speechless too.

(D. S., Gh # 686)

Come and come two thousand times—
every time it works like life.
As nature lives,
as it comes to life,
so you come to us.
As spring comes to bring life,
give us wine.
Take away our will
as you come from the world of freedom.
One will be willing to be alone
apart from the rest of the world
only if he has you
by his side.
We saw you—
we lost our limbs—
as you came from the infinite world
to land on your feet.
You are the sea,
you are the wave—
how restlessly you come.

(D. S., Gh # 2724)

It is irrational to try to compare Molana with any other poet, especially because he never competed with or challenged any other poet, and he never wrote poetry just to show off his skill. Nevertheless, his ghazals are comparable in quality to the ghazals of Saadi, which accidentally have the same rhythm and tune. I must add here that we do not actually know which poet is influencing the other. It does seem odd to think that Saadi's poetry had reached Molana at that time, or that he might have written his ghazals to challenge Saadi, since, as just mentioned, we rarely see in Jallal ud Din Rumi's work this kind of competition. If he intends to allude to poets of the past such as Nezami and Sanai, he always mentions their names in his

poetry. For instance:

> Nezami poetically says:
> "Do not be unkind to me.
> I cannot tolerate your cruelty."
>
> (D. S., Gh # 481)

In explanation of the coincidence between the versification of Molana and Saadi, we can consider another point: Jallal ud Din's ghazals can generally be divided in two groups. First, ghazals written while the poet is awake and conscious, aware of his own thinking and willing to communicate a specific subject. Second, ghazals composed semi-consciously, in rapture and in complete selflessness. The latter are usually more fluent, eloquent, and natural. In this ghazal, which belongs to the second group, and which happens to have the same rhythm as Saadi's, this point becomes apparent. It is an educated guess to that Molana's poem was uttered spontaneously and without the purpose of matching Sheik Saadi's poem.

From Saadi:

> One day in rapture,
> I will entwine with your hair.
> From your two sweet lips,
> I will drink with zeal a hundred-fold.
> If you want to hurt me,
> here I am,
> this is me
> and this is my head.
> If you want to love me,
> my life's beneath your footstep.
> You told me to sit down and suffer
> the pain of separation—
> told me to get up, get up!
> abandon your life—
> your wish is my command.

I will sit and I will stand.
So many broken vows—
to leave you and your love.
This time I promise
not to make another vow.
I lost the silver of my heart
in the dirt at your feet.
I sift through the dust.
It's useless.
The silver's gone.

(Saadi, Gh # 866)

From Molana:

I am a daredevil lover.
I'm not afraid to love.
I am a filthy drunkard.
I'm not afraid to shout.
My friends all ask me,
Do you not fear to love?
If I avoid love, I tell them,
with what then do I struggle?
I am a patient butterfly,
I burn and I tolerate
I am selfless; I am drunk.
I fall and I rise.
If you want my head—
here, I toss it at your doorway.
If you want my gold—
there, I throw it in your path.
On Doomsday,
when the dead rise up from the dirt,
poor me—
tomorrow
I shall rise from you.
If you say that Shams Al Hagh Tabrizi
will come out in resurrection
I will saturate the soil of your ground with perfume and
pure musk.

(Attributed to Molana)

The purpose here is not comparison. Saadi is unquestionably the God of eloquence and is the greatest master of the Farsi language. Nevertheless, Molana's ghazals, placed next to an example from the most powerful school of prose and poetry shine with beauty, eloquence, maturity, and cohesiveness. In addition, the ghazals express Molana's characteristic passion.

According to lovers of Saadi's poetry, the special verse in the ghazal above is the line, which ends with the phrase "I will stand." Here is where the art of the master is effortlessly exhibited:

> You told me to sit down and suffer
> the pain of separation—
> told me to get up, get up!
> abandon your life—
> your wish is my command.
> I will sit and I will stand.
>
> (Saadi, Gh # 866)

In the ghazal by Molana the same rhyme is used, but without the technique of "involution and evolution," but its passion is more palpable:

> I am a patient butterfly,
> I burn and I tolerate.
> I am selfless; I am drunk.
> I fall and I get up.
>
> *(Attributed to Molana, D. S., Gh # 4)*

The fluency and genuineness of a poem or a passage of prose is its most important element, whether in the art of writing or in speech. The reader or the listener must not sense that a word is present just to satisfy some constraint of the versification, or any other kind of artificiality. The most powerful master of this art is Saadi, to the point that he covers it

over sometimes:

> Do you know what I go through—
> what goes through my head—
> all because of you?
> Your hands
> come, come with your own feet
> see all you can see.
>
> (Saadi, Gh # 1008)

When we read this poem by Saadi, we cannot tell that by using the words, "hands," "feet," and "head" Saadi has used a very difficult technique in the art of poetry. Here, we do not get any sense of obligatory diction or artificiality because the words are placed so naturally and function so well to communicate the meaning.

As opposed to Saadi, in the poem above, Amaagh Bokharaii[23] seems to be obligated to use the two words "moor" (ant) and "moo" (hair) in his eulogy. Even though he has positioned the two words skillfully, the obligation is tangible.

> If there is a talking ant (moor),
> that is me.
> If there is a hair (moo) that is alive
> that hair is me.
> My body is the shadow of a hair (moo),
> my heart, the eyes of an ant (moor),
> for I am far from my beloved
> whose hair is so fragrant
> and has a waist like an ant...
>
> (Bokharaii)

Without a doubt, poetic versification is a fine art, but it should only be practiced to the point where it does not feel like

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[23] Bokharaii, Amaagh. Iranian poet of the 6th century Hejira. Born in 1048 in Bokhara. He lived during the rule of Sultan Sanjar.

an obligation. This technique is artistic and beautiful when it is not too obvious and when it does not replace or sacrifice meaning. Unfortunately, literary talent seems to be in decline. For instance, today a poet's technical ability and his obligation towards using it have become the ultimate criterion in the art of poetry. Actually this decline has spread to the art of prose, the domain where there is little room for playing around with words. All this is occurring to the extent that the expression of meaning has been buried under a wave of harmonious cadences, rhymes, unfamiliar words and references to verses and parables from Arabic and Farsi poetry. Vassaf Al Hazrat[24] and *Dorra-ye-Nadera*[25] have replaced the non-obligatory prose of *Bay Haghi*, *Asrar Al Towhid* and *GhaboosNaameh*[26].

Poets themselves also have started to engage in peculiar amusements like eulogies with incomplete letters and poems with missing letters. Obviously, in the chaotic literary market where these fancies are considered art, there is no room for the appearance and propagation of a collection of poems that is purely an exhibition of one's soul.

The *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* is exempt from all obligations of versification and from all affectation. Molana's language is simple, natural, and is only there to express its meaning. This simplicity and innocence is present to such a degree that sometimes there is no attention to the details of the techniques in the art of poetry. The speaker is too occupied with other things. He is expressing his thoughts and feelings. At

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[24] Vassaf Al Hazrat or Sharaf ud Din Shirazi. A well known Iranian literary man of the 8th century Hejira.

[25] *Dorra-ye-Nadera*. Written by Astar-Abadi. A book about Nader Shah, the King of Afshar.

[26] *Bay Haghi*. Written by Onsor Al Maali, Kaykavoss, Ebne Voshmgir (died 1082). *Bay Haghi* is a book of history that includes the two books, *Al Towhid* and *Ghaboos Naameh* which are books of ethics.

times he does it almost unintentionally and in complete rapture and selflessness:

If I am selfless—
So be it.
I fear no calamity.
What is left of me
is doing the talking.

(D. S., Gh # 2277)

I take off my clothing at night when going to sleep.
I wake up in the morning, and I'm all dressed again.

(D. S., Gh # 1629)

I happened to take a trip—without me.
There, my heart opened up inside me.
I am the one who is drunk without wine.
I am the one always joyous without me.

(D. S., Gh # 128)

Jallal ud Din's defining character is this very selflessness, this "without me" and the supernatural act of going beyond the limits of individuality and of the material world. It is under such conditions that beautiful poetry full of rhythm and full of music pour from his tongue:

Once more the thief of my heart found me
walking through the bazaar, all content.
One more time, he spotted me. I hid—
but those narcissus eyes were able to see me.
I ran from the tavern. He found me.
Why am I running away? None can escape him.
Why am I hiding, when he always finds me?
I thought to myself, if I hide,
no one will be able to find me in this crowded town.
He found me. He found me in spite of the abundance of secrets.
Hurray! He found me! My idol found me!
How lucky, that con-man found me.

I'd left a mark with blood in all directions.
He was stalking me, that's why he found me.
He gave me the wine to heal my injured heart,
the moment he found me, that harmless beloved of mine.
I was lost like a scale beneath an abundance of crops.
Today the moon found me,
deep inside the shelter,
hidden from sight.
Hiding in the depths of the sea,
the skilled fisherman caught me.
That precious life
found lightness and flew.
That cup of enlightening wine
found me.
Today I have no mind, no speech, no deed,
for he found and took all three...

(D. S., Gh # 330)

It is very difficult to understand the essence of thought and language that has blocked Molana's intellect and his speech. It is difficult to understand the being who brings rhythm to Molana as he is searching for rhyme. It is almost impossible to understand the being who Molana finds everywhere, the one whom the rhythm is for. Molana himself cannot know it for all his vigilance. Only in rapture can Molana approach this being, and even there, he is drowned by his light. When he is out of this trance, he loses the being. But we wish we could know too. We want to know the one who "found him," even when he was "lost like a scale beneath an abundance of crops," who could reach him even when he was "hiding in the depths of the sea" — that incredible being who touched him in the essence of all thought and speech, who made him utter the most awesome poetry.

We are left unaware of the storm that created the turmoil in the sea; we only want to search for the crashing waves and to be able to hear them roar in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi.* This in itself causes another problem. Perhaps it is this second

problem that has prevented the real value of the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* from manifesting itself.

It is no wonder that the *Mathnavi,* even though it has the same shortcomings (such as containing some weak poems and displaying a lack of attention to the words used), has become more popular than the *Divan-e Shams.*

As mentioned before, the *Mathnavi* includes many of Molana's teachings, as well as some verses of the Koran; it presents the basics of Islamic belief, and is in accordance with the Islamic religion. But the *Divan-e Shams,* on the surface, appears just to be a book of ghazals, so readers expect to see poems like Saadi's ghazals or at least like Attar and Iraqi. They are too impatient to try to dig out four to five thousand verses from forty thousand, for that matter they simply turn away from it.

A point of interest, which again distinguishes Jallal ud Din from the other poets (even from those who are known for their marvelous form and for their innovations in expressing meaning), is that his innovations in language, both in the *Mathnavi* or in *Divan-e Shams* go further than any other poet. Furuzanfar, in an article[27] has written, "There are 75,000 qualificative and additive combinations in Molana's ghazals out of which 10,000 are created by his own mind..." In other words, Molana creates many new combinations of words and phrases in order to give expression to meanings never thought of before.

I am not much acquainted with statistics, so I should not make any judgment about these astonishing figures, but I know that in the language of Molana we come across many new interpretations and "framing" that we have not seen anywhere else:

In the orgies of the mind

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[27] Referring to the part of *In Memory of Molana* by Furuzanfar.

on the path of love for you
this man of knowledge is exhausted,
distracted and drunk.

(D. S., Gh # 2869)

"Orgies of the mind" is quite a new expression. The first time I saw anything like it was in European writers such as Anatole France's[28] who compared "the vagrant imagination" to an orgy, or when Romaine Rolland introduces the unleashed imagination as such; but I do not recall anything else of the kind in Iranian literature. We come across many such expressions in Molana's language because in desperation, he only wants to pour out the full content of his overflowing mind, and that leaves him no choice but to create new forms.

Since conversational language is limited and only needs about two or three thousand words and idioms, the expansion of any language will depend on the efforts that educators and the literary class make in expressing their ideas. The more that science, philosophy and technology improves in any given society, the wider its vocabulary and the more abundant its idioms become. Poets and writers are the most influential agents in this development, since their thoughts and their imaginations are not confined to conversational usage. For this reason they are forced to discover new functions for words and bring them into new combinations. Obviously when a poet is more innovative and has a powerful imagination, his creative talent will work more in this direction. In Molana's language, more than in the language of any other poet or writer, we are introduced to special terminology, to innovative verbal combinations, and to various verbal forms. Molana only expresses meanings, but he expresses these meanings in extemporaneous verbal inventions because the existing verbal forms did not have the capacity to express them. This is most

[28] France, Anatole. French author (1844-1924). His first novel *Le Crime de Silvestre Bonnard*, was written in 1881

apparent in his playful exploration of rhymes:

My idol has pledged
to turn and to revolutionize the wine—
to intoxicate every mind
generation after generation.
Go through all the drinkers—
turn them all to fools,
so you may not find a sage
through the entire circle of human kind.

(D. S., Gh # 3423)

Yes,
this might be so, and yet—
once my beloved comes onto the scene,
everything vanishes:
there'll be no sound coming from the planet of music, Venus.
No tragic sound of mourners,
none at all.
Hey there! Be alert!
Guard the egg like a bird.
You are about to come to life
out of the egg of your heart—
born to delight,
to laughter—
you will belong!

(D. S., Gh # 2437)

In a ghazal with the opening line, "eshgh ra bahr bi gharar bovad" (Love is an impatient sea), where he talks about the power and the effects of love and naturally asserts that "name, respect, shame, and thought" (nãm, namoos, sharm, andisheh) are unstable, he thinks of love as the main axis of the universe. He calls love "Plato and Galen" or the "cure for pride and prejudice." (Aflaatoon va Jalinnus or the dava-ye-nekhvat va namoos). Here the expected rhyme should be "kenar va bigharar" (side and restless), however, his improvising and problem solving mind puts "ghobar" (dust) instead. He writes:

Name, respect, shame, and thought (nãm, namoos, sharm va andisheh)
will all be swept away like dust (pish e jaroobeshan ghobar bovad).

(D. S., Gh # 986)

The *Mathnavi* is filled with such innovations. It is most apparent that Molana is not striving for rhymes. He is not limited because of it and he does not introduce subjects in order to balance the rhyme. Instead the theme is foremost in his mind and he wants to express it; if the rhyme is not suitable, he creates a new form and rhymes with the new creation.

There is no difference: they are only names.

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

The multiple faces of objects are the reason for the multiplicity of names, but truth is single. In Farsi one asks for *angoor* (grape), a Turk asks for *ozoom,* while an Arab asks for *annab.* All three are asking for the same thing but saying it in three different ways. People are only quibbling over the multiple "faces" of things, where the meaning is only one. Molana has summed this up in the second verse of this ghazal:

There is no difference; there are only names.
Look inside for meaning. It will all settle down.

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

Stop looking for water—search for thirst!
The water will then erupt from above and below.

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

Now read the following samples of Molana's innovative language taken almost at random from the *Divan-e Shams.* If a curious-minded researcher wanted to, he might write a book about them. First listen to a ghazal about the night—not the actual night, but a night in the imagination, a night of

drunkenness and selflessness, a night mixed with passion. Listen:

The eyes do not open. They are tight asleep.
Open your eyes and watch it all.
Look then, how restless they are in their cavity,
the eyes are tight like balls of mercury.
It is getting so late at night
people have vanished like the stars in moonlight.
The dark and the white of the eye
are drunk with sleep and wine.
All thoughts have fallen like autumn leaves.
All objects are covered with dust.
Watch the salesman darkness, intoxicating everyone.

(D. S., Gh # 315)

And here are some other samples of such innovations:

Fill up my cup with wine,
the treasure is upon me.
Whoever fears this sight—
tell them to stay home,
tell them not to come.

(D. S., Gh # 1248)

I am speechless,
my veins are numb.
If you have no beloved of your own,
How can I tell you of mine?

(The Sixth Book of the Mathnavi)

Man is in constant search of another—
one who has the art.
Love comes,
makes him drunk,
turns him upside down.
A heart, like a piece of rock
aims to be a jewel.
Love arrives,

releases the heart,
(of jewel or not).
There are gypsies in this town
pilfering hearts,
looking into the people's eyes
and making them blind.
If drunken eyes aim for yours
hold on to your heart—
hold tight!
Your face can't make a front.
Thirst-quenching water knows nothing of thirst.
Joseph has no news
of what "good news" really sounds like.

(D. S., Gh # 3455)

Like an eagle I took off—
off from the arms of the eternal king
to break down the one
parrot-eating owl
in the ruins of the tavern.

(D. S., Gh # 1375)

I have learned to love,
for I have seen your perfection.
I utter poetry,
for I have seen your awesome face.
On the screen in my heart,
your image dances before me.
I have learned to dance,
for I have received your perception.

(D. S., Gh # 4846)

When there is no power, no courage,
what can the horse and the weapon do?
When the heart does not act like a heart,
how can the gut benefit?
What will it do?

(D. S., Gh # 936)

Stop playing the pipe.
We ought to enter silence.
The night has fallen.
On our way home
the night watchman is watching.

(D. S., Gh # 1649)

How long is your absence,
how long will you be gone?
Your love and my soul,
like fire,
like hay.

(D. S., Gh # 2578)

Arise, my single heart,
start to love again.
I am dying of this void,
of confession, of denial.
I am unable to be enlightened
without your pure soul
being with me.
I cannot release myself
of sorrow and of pain.

(D. S., Gh # 745)

How much more do I have to wait
to get your message from the morning breeze?
How long should I stare in the well
to find a picture of the moon?

(D. S., Gh # 1807)

The good water is
all gathered in your stream.
So how can you tell me,
"Do not dip your basin in it,
do not wash your clothes" ?

(D. S., Gh # 3456)

If sugar only knew,
how sweet love can be,
it would melt with shame—
it would not act so sweet.
As Shams-e Tabrizi smiled in the morning
his lust opened the flower bud.

(D. S., Gh # 2872)

If tired—
I'm tired for you;
If drunk—
am drunk with you.
If doomed—
doomed by you.
If alive—
I live for you.

(D. S., Gh # 1447)

Our nightly celebrations
were draped with ambergris and perfume.
The joy of those mornings,
filled with camphor—
filled with you.

(D. S., Gh # 763)

Deep down in the heart of sweet men
all the bitterness of love
is as sweet as wine, as sugar and halva.
The wine, the sugar, the halva
are but the delusions
of a squinting eye.
Sea water is all there is
inside the endless sea.

(D. S., Gh # 744)

I am your harp,

you play me
on each vein.
I vibrate, I sing.
When you get under my skin
I fly to the seventh sky—
this world becomes too tight for me.

(D. S., Gh # 1750)

Today we are laughing,
we are happy and joyous.
Our good fortune is arriving.
The king of kings
is back from the war.
Flourish like a garden,
brighten up like the sky,
swim like a fish:
The sea of Persia is arriving.

(D. S., Gh # 530)

True,
in the house of idols,
in my heart,
it is breath that is worshipped,
counted one by one.
There has never been,
and there is not now,
and there will never be
an idol who matches your beauty.

(D. S., Gh # 2490)

You, oh gambler of hearts,
come forth.
If you mean to wound me,
do it hard.
Do it like a man.
If you want to knock me down,
put me on the bosom of the sea.
If you want to hang me,

hang me from the great dome.
I would cease with this music,
but it's you who are playing the tune.
If the deeper melody is over,
transpose me up the scale.
When you oppose sorrow,
don't be silent:
every moment throw a stone;
hit sorrow on the head.

(D. S., Gh # 1875)

My heart has your affair,
your color,
your image.
How lucky is the tree
that bears your fruit.

(D. S., Gh # 758)

Cupbearer, I beg of you,
I need a drink.
You serve justice upon my heart—
all the others deliver iniquity.

(D. S., Gh # 783)

We burn in despair
and we like it that way.
The water of life goes by—
we look for the fire.
Behind this blue curtain
there is such beauty
out of whose eyes
the stars receive their shining.

(D. S., Gh # 785)

Do not fake it, if you don't choose solitude.
Don't quarrel
so you won't be single.
Don't hurt the people around you, don't act like a wolf,

or, like the wolf, you'll be left in the desert.
Don't go around kissing all the lips who beg for it.
If you do, you will loose
the heart ravishing beloved.
Come, step on my eyes!
You are more "me"
than me myself.

(D. S., Gh # 2798)

Boil, boil in your chest.
Make this wine
turn the autumn into spring.
The leaves fall, fall.

(D. S., Gh # 2088)

My poems like the bread of Egypt,
if left overnight, will go stale.
Eat the bread when fresh,
before it is covered by dust.

(D. S., Gh # 981)

I don't know why he had this thought. Is he reacting to criticism when he says, his poems are only effective on the nights of samaa while they are accompanied by exhilarating music; as the mysterious darkness of the night fades away, when the brightness of daylight takes over, when human logic replaces passion and love, the hidden meanings can no longer be drawn from my poem?"

It is true, the "do's" and the "don'ts" of society misled many people from approaching the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*: But 700 years has passed since your death, Jallal ud Din, and your poems with all their antiquity remain fresh and new. Like old wine, they still intoxicate the zealous seekers.

IV

The Innovative Creator

What is poetry to me?
Nothing I want to boast about.
I have another skill
different from other poets' technique.
Poems are like dark clouds,
I am the moon behind them.
Do not read me from the clouds.
Watch the moon shine behind them.

(Attributed to Molana)

When poets compare
a crescent to a horseshoe,
the moon will not stop being the moon
due to the poets' goof.

(D. S., Gh # 298)

The time of the old merchants has passed.
The market is mine.
I am new.

(D. S., Gh # 424)

Jallal ud Din Mohammad's style of writing departs from all the styles of writing before him. This is another reason that most people remain estranged from the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi.*

Molana not only is free from affectation and prosodic obligations he disregards all standards of poetry—all that is customary and common. He uses whatever word comes to mind and improvises freely to express his meaning:

When you entered the garden,
with your face more beautiful than the flowers,
Ah, what rapture your fire aroused
in the heart of all the flowers—
smoke rising from the tulips
ablaze with your soul-colored fire.
The spine of the violet was bent with your abundance.
Like men of religion,
the grass blades were mean and dry—
they became drunk and joyous
with the lust of your lips.

(D. S., Gh # 2242)

The above ghazal, which starts in the "Baharieh"[1] style, is not just a ghazal, nor is it an eulogy or a simple spiritual poem. It is a mixture of all three styles. In it, Molana has expressed what he felt at that moment. Viewing the garden and the grass has once again stirred up his love. Flowers and the green grass have opened him up to unification and divine joy. He is fearless when he says, "Like men of religion the grass blades were mean and dry." The beauty and the freshness of his poetry lie in this very style. Instead of comparing the meaning to the tangible (as is the style of most poets), he compares the tangible—the dryness of the grass—to the dryness of the devout, the latter pertaining to the meaning.

With this innovative approach a hidden point comes to light, and the strength of Molana's language manifests itself: as a rule the point of similarity (dryness) is naturally stronger in the "vehicle" (the man of religion).

When he compares the dry grass (tenor) to a man of religion, naturally the man of religion appears more depressed and lifeless than the dry grass; by that he shows his resentment towards superficially religious people who lack spirituality.

Molana does not speak in the ordinary language of other poets, who might write: "Your generosity turned the dry grass green." This way of speaking is not sufficient for his untamed feelings. It could not possibly show their intensity. Therefore, without deliberation, he says that the grass "became drunk and joyous/with the lust of your lips." The grass obviously does not become drunk, yet here, lays the innovation. The power of

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[1] Baharieh. A vernal ode.

Molana's language is in this kind of interpretive invention. As if the grass were a living being but depressed, the wine brings vitality and joy to it. Moreover, the wine is not extracted from grapes; it comes from the red lips of the beloved.

A lover wants nothing else but the presence of his or her beloved; wine, opiate or any other intoxicating substance can be dispensed with; what he needs are the lips of his beloved to give him life and make him drunk. A sweet look from the beloved is livelier, more exhilarating, and more motivating than any other stimulant for the lover.

Ordinary minds are not used to the kind of innovation that exists in *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*. They demand the verse frames and forms to which they are accustomed like Saadi's: "The emerald carpet spread on the ground, and the carpet man, the wind, sprinkled the royal pearls of the world in the foot steps of the king and prime minister…"

Instead of saying, "Smoke going up from the tulips /ablaze..." if Molana had said the "burning desire of the tulips from the red of your fire," it would have been closer to the mind and understanding of the people.

Since the soul does not have a color how could the fire of the beloved be the color of the soul? This interpretation is much too delicate, subtle, and new to be appreciated by ordinary people. Only the refined mind that is tired of the ordinary enjoys this interpretation. Who thinks of the black spot inside the tulip as the eternal fire, a fire that is the source of the whole universe?

Innovations and creativity in *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* exist to such a degree that one might think that no other poet could possibly have so many personal insights that are not

shared by any other poet.

There is a house, where harp and bells
play constantly.
Ask the owner
what kind of house this is.
Why is an idol there, if this is the house of God?
Why the light of God, if the convent of Mogies.[2]
The soil and dust of this house
smell like ambergris.
A knock on this door
is music and poetry...

(D. S., Gh # 332)

A ghazal filled with innovation, filled with excitement and meaning—all to express one matter. "The soil and dust of this house/smell like ambergris" when Molana wants to talk about the place of the heart, the home of the soul. When he is describing the lofty spirit of a human who has been raised to levels higher than instincts or lust, he has no other option than to say that "the soil" is pleasant. Scents and perfumes are tangible, sensible things by which he can show the superiority of the place of the soul. The inventiveness in the next lines surpasses even this: "A knock on this door/is music and poetry." Even the clamor in the house expresses balance and fosters poems and songs that are filled with the poet's feelings and thoughts.

People look for the familiar and ordinary. The ordinary is closer to their thinking and to their taste and the further they go, the fewer the readers. But Molana is not looking for customers and his aim is not to please. There are shadows

[2] Mogie, mogh: fire-worshipper

coming and going, whispering in his mind and soul. He presents these shadows, and interprets and translates some of the whispers. He does not care if he breaks the rules of other poets, or whether his interpretations are common or not:

The flower asked me,
"Why search for softness among the rough thorns?"
I answered,
"In this transaction,
why look for the sober?"
He said, "In this madness
who's your beloved? —Show me!"
I said,
"You have not fallen in love,
why do you seek a beloved?"
He said,
"Show me the way to the tavern.
I wish to feel the same way."
I said, "You are still a child,
why are you asking for wine?"
He said,
"You are so unconscious, so drunk,
what did you have to drink?"
I said,
"You poor being. Watch out!
What are you seeking?"
He said sarcastically, "Do you call this a garden?
No perfume is reaching me."
I said,
"If you cannot smell it,
why go in search of gardens?"
He said, "The faithful are only dreaming."
I said,

"You are awake—
why are you thinking of dreaming?"

(D. S., Gh # 2619)

To recite these verses is surely to express a certain mood and purpose that we do not know about. Yet we can guess that it is to plead a cause or to express the fact that not everyone has the capacity to become illuminated. Only when the soul is refined, is one capable of evolving.

The same concepts apparent in the teachings and lessons of other Gnostics, are given an erotic touch in Molana's language:

This time around in loving,
I have suddenly been caught.
This time I have given up
on the way to prosperity.
I have torn my heart
from my life.
I live on other things now.
I have burnt up my wisdom,
my heart, and my mind.
Ah, people, people—
I can no longer be one of you.
Things that I think about now
have not even crossed the mind of a madman—
even when the lunatic hears them,
he runs away in chains.
I have dealt with death,
I have skipped mortality.
Like the unborn child in the womb
I have grown in blood.
A human being is born once—

I've been born a million times.
Come see what I see—
come see me through my eyes.
I have chosen a place,
outside of these visions.
You are drunk with wine,
I am enraptured without it.
You smile with your lips,
I have laughed without them....

(D. S., Gh # 1372)
(the entire ghazal is twenty-two verses in Farsi)

These ghazals are vague and elusive and are the reflections of the turmoil within.

In the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* there is no talk of ordinary matters; a body lean like an evergreen, a mouth resembling a flower bud, a face like the moon or musky hair. In fact, throughout this voluminous collection of poetry, one cannot find a single ghazal that is written to satisfy a technique in poetry or to reproduce a style that have been repeated thousands of times.

From its onset up to the time of Molana, Persian poetry has always been written in set forms. Many poets adjusted the content to the rhythm. Being a poet had become a profession and like any other profession, a means to make a living. A man of letters with literary talent might compose an eulogy for a member of royalty and become wealthy. These poets, having chosen a measure and a rhythm, aligned words that matched rhythm. They then used their literary knowledge and talent to tailor a suitable content.

Even though some of these poets were not inspired or

motivated by an original thought or a state of emotional excitement, sometimes they had good imaginations and used them to adorn their eulogies. A description of nature, a love scene with an imaginary lover were used as they struggled to find a way to panegyrize one of their own kind. The Koran, refers to poets as "Fi kol-e-vadi himoon."[3]

These skillful literary men, who matched words in order to make solid and beautiful poetry, shared certain metaphorical figures and associations with poets who, in expressing their feelings and thoughts created poetry. I call all of this a "frame of poetry."

Molana paid no attention to these frames. It was not a conscious intention or out of pride that he invented his own form and his personal style; it was rather because the images of his soul did not fit within ordinary frames. Many of the ghazals, like the verses below, express meanings that are not apparent. However, we can clearly feel that he is trying to express an internal incident that no doubt surpasses the common frames:

I am drunk
and you're insane,
so who will take us home?
How many times have I told you
not to drink so much wine?
I see no sober man in town:
each one drunker
and crazier
than the other one.

[3] "Fi kole Vadi himoon". This refers to the verse 26 of Sura 225 of the Koran: "Have you not seen that the poets are wanderers in the valley?"

Hey! you playing gypsy—
who is drunker,
you or me?
Next to yours, my rapture,
my incantation,
is out in the open.
I left the house one day.
I encountered a drunk on my way.
Hidden in his eyes
hundreds of nests, hundreds of gardens!
Like an anchorless ship
careening side to side.
And hundreds envied him,
wise and sane.
I asked him,
"Where do you come from?"
Mockingly he said,
"I am half from Turkestan, half from Farghaneh[4].
I am part heart and soul.
part made of water and soil.
One half on this shore, and
one half still a pearl inside a shell."
I asked him,
"Will you be my friend, for we are kin."
But he told me, "I cannot tell the difference,
between relative or stranger."
I have lost my heart—
I have lost it all.
I sit in a tavern,
a chest filled with words,
should I let it all out?

(D. S., Gh # 2309)

[4] Farghaneh. A city in the old Khorasan region of Iran.

Has there been an incident, a mental or spiritual event? Is Molana pointing to an encounter with Shams-e Tabrizi or Salah ud Din Zarkub whose selflessness and humbleness surpassed all human boundaries and made them seem like anchorless ships that careen from side to side? Could the notions, "Partly Turk, partly Farghaneh, partly heart and partly soul, partly dirt and partly water" be an inspired expression of man's nature and his dual existence? Could the internal luminosity and matter of light and darkness be metaphors for a soul who is trying to reach annihilation and on his path has lost all that is apparent, existing where there is no difference between the familiar and the strange? These kinds of concepts are behind his compositions. His chest is filled with all of this, and he has no alternative but to express himself.

In the following ghazal, Molana wishes to express a complex and mysterious matter, however, he is unable to use an ordinary poetic form. He is compelled to deviate from the circle of the ordinary and the following innovation appears. (No one knows the origin or the reason behind its utterance. We can only speculate that its metaphor insinuates a direct mockery of those who are still encumbered by ordinary appearances. Their vision cannot bear to distinguish reality. If they were to find the right and true way to knowing God, they would reach a level higher than the ordinary):

No, no you are not in love.
A curl of hair, a mark on a face,
too delicate, a little angered.

Tied to your anklet,
that curl and that curve—
how could you deal with death?
up above the universe
little wings, tiny feathers,
you, weak-hearted, weak
find a heart to live on.
One day you will have to leave
this gold and this material wealth.
Remove the stigma.
You are not the white-haired old woman, the earth.
You are a hero yourself.
You are like Rostam, Son of Zaal.5
I dreamt of you last night.
This was my dream:
Whirling, the crystalline sphere,
joyous and carefree,
you were spinning and saying,
"Venus, look at me—
I'm free,
free of luck,
free of adversity."
Dervish and sadness?!
Drunk and no wine?!
Go; go to your beloved,
be at his service;
be devoted to him.
Like the True Man
Go, pass beyond the seven skies;
ignore the spells of Saturn;
Leave astrologer

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[5] Rostam, Son of Zaal. The legendary national hero of the Persians according to the history recorded by Firdawsi in the Shahnaameh. He is often called Rostam, Son of Zaal (the name of his father meaning "old with white hair").

in his fortune telling and his pieces of gravel.
I have the cloak made of the sun,
I have the pearl,
I have the jewel,
I don't need the woolen cloak.
I told an Arab friend,
"Look me in my wet eyes."
He whispered to himself,
"Don't fool me so much."
I spoke and I was cooking up a hundred tricks in my heart.
My beloved laughed and said,
"I know you from the inside."
Be quiet! See the king.
You are the white hawk in his hands,
you are not the nightingale
who is captive of his song.

(D. S., Gh # 1316)

The words we use to compliment each other—the words we use repeatedly in dialogue with people we know—are hardly capable of expressing our true feelings. They fall short of expressing the leap our soul takes towards a loved one. To do that, we are forced to find words and sentences beyond the common and the ordinary.

The texture of Molana's words is far from artificial. His language is a natural, spontaneous exudation of his mind. We can see clearly that he had no intention of attaining this style. He has not paid attention to our logic and our way of thinking. He did not intentionally and logically evaluate his subject in order to rule out old styles and then come up with the new ones.

No, his style of writing and the creation of new interpretations are the result of the very same upheaval in his

feelings that fosters his creativity and his natural tendency to express meaning in an alive and effective manner.

This analysis is based on a comparison. When Molana utters simple ghazals, when there is no complex substance roaring in his soul and his passion has not crippled him, he gets closer to the circle of other poets. Of course, again his expressions are innovative, yet not all that far from the familiar:

Talk to us, boy,
you say good things,
your name is good.
To calm my heart, talk.
Say the name of my beloved.
You are the door keeper to paradise,
call on us, messenger of love.
Deliver me the message,
don't disgrace me.
Open up the door to goodness,
don't break my glass heart;
tell the story of that goblet.
If you have closed the door to giving,
do not close it to hope.
Come up to the roof top,
say it from there.
If you fear revealing the secret in public,
wrap it up in common words
and say it to me that way.
Do not talk of suffering—
nothing but the treasures.
Don't tell me about the path,
only talk about the destination.
Talk about the sea
to which we all return,

talk about the domain
beyond all days and beyond the years.

(Attributed to Molana)

Ah, the core of life—
where were you last night?
No, I am not mistaken
you were right here in my heart.
I envy the clothes you wear,
for you were in them last night.

(Attributed to Molana)

Come closer, my seductive idol;
come, my love;
come, my soul;
dance for me.
I missed you—
come see for yourself
all the hearts who missed you.
How many times do you ask me,
why my face is pale,
when you know it's been apart from you?
Come, buy my soul from my body,
free my spirit from its shame.
Now, with the goodness of your words,
my heart of stone
is dealing with gold.

(D. S., Gh # 2117)

What supports this idea is that Molana deviates further from the norm of other poets when a special situation, a specific subject or an event moves him to the point where he opens his mouth and utters poetry. This is because his thoughts, his

intellect, and every particle of his existence are focused on one point. He does not see or think of any other thing or any other circumstance. Awareness of other circumstances only makes him concentrate on his condition and that becomes a stimulus for utterance. If this is not the case, can we find any other explanation for some of the ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*?

I am going to turn round and round,
I am going to turn around my heart.
I will turn so many times
till my body fails to carry me around
nor my soul
be able to carry my body around.
For that I will circumambulate my life;
I will battle my will;
exhaust this mine
fight it to the point
where my warp and weft tear apart.
How cold the body
does not turn around my soul,
with a torch like the sky—
you are the center:
take the compass and draw—
draw a circle around my life.
As long as the water leads,
this water mill will turn around.
How naive you are
to tell it to stop or to say
my wheat is grinded.
Water does its job
in spite of you,
your wheat or your crop.

For as long as the water leads, the wheel will pulse.
like the secrets in my heart.
I am but a riddle in His hands—
He turns me around in His hands.
He riddles: that's what he does.
I riddle: this is what I do.
My body is like a skein—
God is knitting it.
How could I challenge it?
of this warp and my weft—
cannot see its warp—
see the skein and its spin.
The skein claims,
"My battle is not useless."
Body, like a turban,
soul as the head,
body is turning around its head.
Turn over another turn,
it's inside you I turn.
Shams-e Tabrizi, you are fresh,
sometimes a turban, sometimes a head.
I fear your turning
in the blind spot of my vision.

(D. S., Gh # 1802)

In this ghazal there is talk of turning and swirling. A riddle, a turban, confusion and the spinning around his heart are all at play here. These are not common poetic figures, neither in the language of the Gnostics nor in the language of the poets. If Aflakee[6], who criticizes some of Molana's ghazals as having

[6] Aflakee, Shams ud Din Ahmad. A student of Aaref, Molana's grandson. He was asked to write about Molana. He started the book *Karamat* in 1340 and completed it in 1364.

less dignity had more imagination, he would definitely have written stories that were closer to reality and more acceptable than the stories he made up about Molana in the *Karamat*[7]. For example, such and such a disciple puts a turban on his head and a worker struggles with a riddle. Watching them brings Molana to the issue of fatalism and predestination, so he improvises these ghazals!

The following ghazal seems like a comic representation, even ludicrous at first sight. One cannot blame the reader for assuming that Molana is composing a ghazal about the death of his donkey. One may even compare it with a metaphor in the *Mathnavi*, "donkey went and donkey gone." If we look closely, however, we will see that each line has a message and that a spiritual goal sparkles in it. Here the "donkey" is a figure in a code; it is a symbol of animal instinct or of the dark essence of earth that can become the origin of light. The brutal aspect of humanity is gone, and the celestial spirit is beginning to appear. It could be said that Molana is so obsessed with such meanings that even the death of his donkey and the idea of buying a new one brings him to write such a ghazal:

Where is my donkey
oh, where is my poor donkey?
He died last year,
my poor donkey.
thank God for the loss of my donkey.
One less headache—
If my cow were to die too
I wouldn't shed a tear.

[7] *Karamat*. See note 6 of this chapter.

The joy I am after is not in the cow either.
The cow and the donkey—
if they both were to go,
my beloved is still here,
yes he is here, yes he is here, yes he is here, and yes he is here
in both worlds, for all eternity.
My donkey is my slave.
In a donkey's ears, a golden earring?
If you give it the golden ring
you will regret the loss of your gold.
Oh my gold, oh my gold!
The slave disobeys,
does not move a leg,
will not eat the hay—
his service at my door
is nothing but a headache.
A cow on the Zodiac,
a cow under the ground—
if I can skip them both
luck will be on my side.
I went to the marketplace
where one buys a donkey.
Anxiously I looked around,
tired of donkeys,
tired of slaves of donkeys.
Someone said to me, "Here buy another one!
Replace your donkey, if he has died."
I told him to be silent.
Donkeys don't obey me on my path.

(D. S., Gh # 1813)

Outside, shell—
inside, seed—
the fruit, a captive.

Like the fig, we are free
of the shell
and of the seed (inside).
Blood was our food first.
Then it turned to milk.
We grew wiser.
Now we have teeth.
We do not need milk any more.
We are free.

(D. S., Gh # 1472)

These images and the allegories they form are not based on any conventional or general subject matter. Is it that eating a fig makes him think of other fruit that are restricted by their tough skin or hard seeds? Yet a fig is edible all the way through. Molana suggests that the more attachments one has, the more limited one becomes.

I am not so fearless
as to run away from my beloved.
I don't have sword in my hand—
how can I run from battle?
I am like a piece of wood.
I have things to do with the carpenter.
I will not run from nails.
I will not be degraded
if I am chopped by an axe.
I am shapeless like a piece of wood.
I shall not disobey the axes.
If I run from the carpenter
I'll only be good for the fire.
If I turn from the sun,
I'll be cold as a rock.

I will be lonely,
dark, and narrow
like a cave
if I run from my beloved.

(D. S., Gh # 1429)

The following ghazal, which expresses different types of submission and surrender, is not composed in a conventional form either. Here again, one has to assume that daily observations have triggered him to express what was in his mind. In other words, these thoughts have preoccupied him to such an extent that any contingency or any event automatically became associated with the same thought:

Consciously, and apropos of nothing,
my guest has arrived.
My heart said,
"Your soul has come."
My soul said,
"Where is the beloved?"
We all go insane:
He is in this house!
To see the beloved,
we run to the streets!
He is shouting out loud,
"I am here, right here, in this house."
We cannot hear him shouting—
we too scream out.
He is the bird who sings,
singing in the garden;
we the cuckoo birds
jumping in despair,
cuckoo, cuckoo (where, where)?

A crowd has gathered
in the middle of the night
in search of a burglar.
The thief is shouting along with the others,
we cannot tell which is which.
His sound and that of the others have mingled.
"There's a burglar in the house,
watch out!"
Lo, he is closer to you than your very self,
where are you looking?
He is right here inside you.
Learn from the snow: melt!
Wash your self
completely out of yourself.

(D. S., Gh # 2172)

It is normally assumed that the reason most Gnostics fashion scenes connected to mystical philosophical issues such as pantheism, and the lucidity of existence, is to make us understand these subject matters better. However, the details and the overall style of Molana's poetry—the variety of metaphors and circumstances in the *Divan-e Shams*—lead one to assume something quite different. These details are like a knob on a radio whose antenna is connected to an ocean of waves: it is this that is making him speak. In other words, his words are a compulsion and an emergence, rather than an explicitly formulated teaching:

You took away my heart,
you fed it to the crows.
Instead,
I took your apparition to retaliate.

If you come, I'll come,
If you take, I'll take.
If you speak, I'll speak
all the things that drunks are expected to do.
Boil, boil a good wine from your chest!
Be like the season of spring,
with boiling springs!
Turn the falling leaves of autumn into a radiant freshness.
Be quiet my body—
let my soul speak.
For Ottoman[8] will leave the kingdom.
Ali[9] will become the king.

(D. S., Gh # 2088)

You are stumbling again.
What did you have to drink?
You are going home drunk—
going from house to house.
Who were you with?
Who did you flirt with?
Who did you kiss?
Tell me the truth.
Oh my heart, my soul,
tell me where the stream is
so I can fill up my cup.
Tell me, my saint,
tell me, my life,
give me some of what you had to drink.
He said, "It is fire.
If you take some of it,

[8] Ottoman. The Turkish government that ruled Iran from 1299 to 1342.
[9] Ali. Imam Ali, son of Abi Taleb who was the prophet Mohammad's uncle. The fourth Caliph of Islam and the first Imam of Shiite Islam.

it will burn you up.
Then you'll scream,
Oh my throat, Oh my throat!"

(D. S., Gh # 2154)

Love came, galloping around the house of the heart
going around
on the ground of the heart.
I asked, "What is this?"
Love said, "I am reserving this house,
for this is the King's summer house."
I said, "You are doing your job,
but this cannot be.
This is the Shepherd's retreat,
the King is everything to me.
Long live the king.
His place is in the palace—
this shack does not suit him,
this is only in ruins.

(Attributed to Molana)

Creating picturesque scenes is one of the characteristics of Molana's poetry, but unlike other poets Molana did not choose imagery from his observations for such purposes. Molana's scenes are "shadows" that come and go in his soul. Of course, he also created characterizations of them and how beautiful they are:

On nights when the world
is filled with gypsies:
Venus plays the happy tune;
Mars finds out about the feast
and takes the bow and arrow to his waist.

The moon walks like a cock,
wings open in pride,
and stars walk all around him
like female chicks.

(D. S., Gh # 2104)

But most of the scenes he creates are symbolic; they start from daily events and always return to his mystical inner world, his soul:

Gypsies, O gypsies,
hear all about it,
a gypsy has lost his mind!
His secret is revealed;
he is on his way to the madhouse.
No ear escapes this news—
this will blow your mind.
To become part of the mill
he turned into a seed inside a cup.
Do not boast of your knowledge,
all you prominent scholars,
turn around his post in awe.
I, for one, have given up my soul
like the flowers;
I have ripped open my clothes;
no longer a human,
my heart a stranger to my mind—
these drops of intellect
drowned in the sea of His mind—
these tiny souls defeated, by the Soul of souls.
I will be silent.
I will hide this candle.
The sun and the moon—
butterflies around

the candle he has inside.

(D. S., Gh # 526)

Aflakee contended that the above ghazal was written when Molana's friend, Sheik Fakhr ud Din Sivasi,[10] a master in many arts and sciences, suddenly lost his mind.

Listen, we will not leave;
in this house we stay.
God, this is such a place—
so much for us to observe,
each corner with a view,
a garden, a meadow;
no noise of crows,
no wild wolves that kill.
The enemy has spread a rumor in this town
that he is going away
to run from some request—he is going on a trip.
This is all a big lie, God knows it is.
How could he ever depart?
His soul is here with me.
How could he go on walking?
His head is here to stay.
Under the sky without him
how can I find a moon.
That, unlike him,
wherever he might go,
will find plenty of lovers
who will love him dearly.
But he'll come back, I am sure he will.
Where would he ever find

[10] Sheik Fakhr Ud Din Sivasi. An Iranian Gnostic from the city of Sebaste and a close associate of Molana's.

a love like your love—
eyes drunk like yours
wine that matches your redness.
I am like a particle of dust
dancing on a trapeze.
I'll make a rope from a beam of light
coming from a hole in the wall.
I'll hold on to that bar
and turn by madness of loving.

(D. S., Gh # 2614)

These kinds of interpretive constructions are peculiar to Molana and cannot be found anywhere else. One feels without a doubt that these new ideas are not brought up to amuse or only to introduce novel subject matter. Rather it is sensed that a desperate need, a melancholy and passionate thought in its compulsive turn has found an aperture in words through which to express itself. In his language, poetry has broken from the circle of common forms and habitual speech; it has rather become an interpretation of his riotous inner self. It can be said that the originality of Jallal ud Din Mohammad lies in this point.

We do not know of a poet whose lover's figure does not "put an erect cypress to shame"—whether the poet has had an actual lover or not, or whether the lover in fact was short or tall. When we study the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, considering Molana's style, we indeed conclude that if he had had a physical or material love affair and his beloved was of short stature, the poet would never resort to box tree, cypress, or palm tree to describe him or her. Rather he would admire his beloved for that same short stature and would have found innovative language to

describe how him or her. The contents of his poetry would not have been dragged out of a realm belonging to the imagination of other poets; they would all be from the depth of his vast, unsettled soul. Thus he is never concerned about what others have said. He says what he has seen from his own point of view and expresses the quality of his impression.

In the following ghazal, is Molana speaking of a New Year feast for which one of the disciples has arranged a banquet? Or is this a special feast given in Molana's and a group of dignitaries' honor in a convent? In any case, it seems unlikely that he has uttered this ghazal without an introduction. The last four lines are especially mysterious:

The order came:
there is going to be a feast.
Venus is coming down to lust.
Gabriel has been invited one more time.
The cook is frying the fat veal;
it's a fiesta today, indeed,
for you, the divine souls, so come on in!
All the heads of the dignitaries
beautifully greet each other
and admire the feast.
A voice called me in the morning,
"Get up!"
The aroma was a pleasant
aroma of stew and the soup.
I followed the odor and saw the bright light.
It was the aroma that took me to the kitchen.
I asked for a serving to ease down my hunger.
The cook demanded,
"Go away—

this is no food for a human!"
I solicited the kitchen
and the cook caught me
and he hit me on the head with a spatula!
My head then cleared
of rapture, of destruction.

(D. S., Gh # 2809)

An additional point that distinguishes Molana from other poets is the number of redifs[11] in his ghazals, which occur without distracting the poem from its original axis. Other poets, especially the ones who are more industrious, attempt to do the same. They choose difficult redifs to show the power of their genius. But Jallal ud Din never writes for these purposes. The style of his ghazals shows that only a verbal accident or the need to express a thought has led him to his redifs. He is not compulsive about polishing his sentences, or about the coherence of the composition, or the succession of thoughts and matter in a particular ghazal. The strength of his genius lies in improvisation. Through improvisation, he is able to connect the rhythm with the redif in such a way as not to harm the succession of his thoughts.

Molana's powerful mind and poetic talent are such that when he addresses a subject matter, he does so with a great variety of figures and allegories. His subject matters do not usually consist of Spring or gardens of flowers where one presses one's talent to speak in a variety of ways about flowers

[11] Redif. A word or words following the rhyming word, and being the same word throughout a poem. The reader should keep in mind that this definition will not be relevant once the poem is translated.

and green grass. No. Instead, sleepless nights, waiting, the miracle of love, the ecstasy of seeing the beloved and a hundred other little details may trigger Molana's flood-like speech and inspire a ghazal that from beginning to end circles around the same subject. Listen to these ghazals on "waiting." There are fifteen verses and in each one he expresses anticipation:

Whoever awaits you,
will capture luck and fortune.
While crops wait for the rain,
the ground is filled with flowers.
While a mine awaits the sun,
a piece of stone turns to jewel.
While the fetus waits in the womb,
a sperm will become a king.
While the mill awaits the water,
the millstone is restless.
Waiting makes syrup in the jar,
a wine, which make kings drunk.

(D. S., Gh # 985)

Here is another ghazal. This one is about love and its consequences:

If out of my soil, wheat could grow,
the bread made out of that wheat,
would make you drunk.*
The dough and the baker would
go wild, the oven would only
make the music of love.
If you come to my grave to pray,
the stage will make you dance with joy.
Don't come to my grave without the daaf.
In the feast of God,

you may not be sad.
The mouth was shut.
The body, in the grave,
chews on opium, still sweet after death.
God has created me
of the essence of love;
I am that love
even when I die.
I am rapture
made out of the spirit of love.
Tell me,
what could come out of me
except being drunk?

(D. S., Gh # 683)

**The above verse is similar to this song by an unknown Indian woman:*

From the base of each thorn,
growing out of my soil—
if the devout made a toothbrush,
it would make him drunk.

And here is another ghazal about nightfall:

It is nighttime; it is dark—
the sun deep down in the well.
The sun of the lover's soul
went in private with God.
Day camouflaged by the night,
a Turk disguised among Hindus.
It's nighttime now—
come out,

it is no time to hide.
At night we run and cover,
the Zangees12 were following us.
For we have stolen the gold—
the night watchman has found out.
We know how to run at night—
the police are burnt out.
The rooks are lighting the candles,
the pawn has become the king.
May joy and victory be upon
whomever is turned toward the "One."
May happiness and pride be upon
the heart searching for love.
For when he drowns in the sea,
a sea of water is what will be upon him,
like Joseph in that well,
who comes up with fame.
They say a human is made out of a clod of soil
and will return to one.
Would the one turn to dust
who became the soil of his house?

(D. S., Gh # 524)

There are countless subjects in the *Divan-e Shams* that circle around and eventually arrive at Gnostic ideas. If a tireless researcher were to categorize them, there would be an astonishing display of subjects whereby Molana's stature would become most apparent.

Seldom can we find the figures and inventiveness of the ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams* in any other collections of poetry.

[12] Zangees. Natives of Zanzibar. They were strong and tall black people who were hired as guards.

Sometimes Khaghani[13] resembles Jallal ud Din in that the metaphors and the similes used by Khaghani are also uncommon. In regard to the abundance of subject matter, with the exception of Saaeb, no one comes close to Molana's expansive mind. It is useful to present some samples of this abundance, at the end of this chapter. If the length of this book had permitted it, I would have liked to include thousands more:

Every breath I take,
is painted by your image.

(Attributed to Molana)

Come closer,
let us taste your lips.
You are the wine,
come closer.
You are the pearl,
Let us all become the sea.

(Attributed to Molana)

My beloved, where is that kindness,
when, on that day, like the sun,
you poured dancing lights on every particle,
where is that kindness?

(D. S., Gh # 2781)

I tried to run
but my shadow followed.

---

[13] Khaghani, Afzal ud Din Badi Ul Abraham Ebne Ali Khaghani Haghan Shirvani . (Died in 1186). Known as Husam Al Ajam. One of Iran's greatest poets.

If I am to become
a strand of hair
my shadow,
my witness,
will follow me.

(D. S., Gh # 2155)

Let's give wine
from eye to eye—
let's do it
so the mouth
will not find out.

(D. S., Gh # 130)

Thousands of bottles of wine
will not break the spell
when I am so captured
by the charm of your eyes.
The sheen of your lips,
shines on every jewel;
the movement of your hair
has moved me all over.

(D. S., Gh # 922)

Inside my body
not one vein is sober.
The potion of your love has sunk
inside my every vein.

(D. S., Gh # 3396)

Ah, my feverish breath— you as my witness.

Ah, the night that passed— tell the truth, testify,
what went on with me.
Whoever talks about you,
I will watch his mouth.
I desire your mouth
until you have tasted mine.

(D. S., Gh # 2475)

As long as your drunken eyes pour wine
all over my head,
no need for me to take poison.

(D. S., Gh # 1644)

If you are a prey,
be hunted by the king;
if you lose your cloak
lose it in this kind of gamble.

(D. S., Gh # 2833)

After a thousand years,
if you pass my grave one day,
the soil will turn to perfume.
My remains—all turns to soul.

(Attributed to Molana)

The above ghazal is similar to the following two ghazals by Saadi:

If the air of the beloved
passes the grave of the lover,
it would be no wonder.

(Saadi, Gh # 897)

And:

If the decaying bone,
came back to life.
The dead will rise from the grave
if you pass his decaying bone.

(Saadi, Gh # 896)

Also compare these lines by Hafez:

After a hundred years,
if you pass my grave,
my decaying bones will rise,
dancing from the tomb.

(Hafez, Gh # 364)

The world is an old woman—
don't be fooled by her veil:
from the outside,
all coquetry;
from the inside,
all infamy.

(D. S., Gh # 2866)

Molana's ghazal above is similar to Khadjoo's:

Don't lose your heart
to this coquettish old woman:
She is a bride
of many grooms.

(Khadjoo)

It is also similar to the following ghazal by Hafez:

The bride of this world
even though all good,
in unfaithfulness
exceeds the limit.

(Hafez, Gh # 495)

Shams Al Hagh Tabrizi
is as bright as the sun;
my heart glows like dawn,
from the light of his glory.

(D. S., Gh # 1341)

If you have goodness, and
I am the mirror to show it—
hold me in front of you,
let the world see your face.
But no, no, I am mistaken.
I must have been drunk.
A mirror could never
have the magnitude to show your face.

(D. S., Gh # 2887)

Compare the above ghazal to the following by Saadi:

Draw the curtain
so the strangers don't see.
You are too great
and will not fit the mirror.

(Saadi, Gh # 974)

If you are absent from my heart,
why are you still there?
If you still live in my heart,
Why all the tears, why the sadness?

(D. S., Gh # 2987)

Our face as yellow as saffron,
all due to his tulip-colored face;
our heart has sunk with sorrow,
like a comb in his hair;
my heart filled with pain
on the palm of his hand.
The heart that should be happy
is being sniffed by him.

(D. S., Gh # 2130)

When you enter the room
holding the red wine,
compulsion and sorrow
leave
like smoke from the chimney.

(D. S., Gh # 865)

Compare the two ghazals above to the following from Saadi:

Though I had asked you to come
so I might tell you my pain.
What do I do?
when you come,
I forget all my sorrow.

(Saadi, Gh # 974)

The sky is searching,
using hundreds of lights,
looking for the lovely eyes,
that took away our heart.

(Attributed to Molana)

The thought of the good times,
when my beloved,
tall as the evergreen,
stands on the grass— the thought of being with him
bends me like the willow tree.

(D. S., Gh # 3432)

If I rest for a moment,
my soul will not be resting.
I can only rest in the moment
that I am not resting.

(D. S., Gh # 1438)

What you want to see—
see it in the heart,
not in the mirror.
The mirror shows the image,
it does not show your soul.

(Attributed to Molana)

What would the sun lose
entering a village alone?
Would the moon cost less

if it's shown without a cover?

(D. S., Gh # 591)

The edge of the rooftop
is no threat to the moonlight.
Why should we have fear?
since we are riding the moon!

(D. S., Gh # 1709)

My sweetheart, my life, I will turn you and twist you.
You are as ripe as vinegar.
I will turn you to wine.

(D. S., Gh # 2304)

Like the joy of drunkenness
you reside in my eyes.
You have blocked my perception—
that is no gift, no favor.

(D. S., Gh # 3044)

As is the way of the sun worshippers,
we dance and dance at dawn.
Like particles of dust
we perform when we see the light.

(D. S., Gh # 797)

Throw away the clothing
that your thoughts and your mind wears.
The sun will not shine
but on the naked body.

(D. S., Gh # 2073)

My soul is on fire,
my face, gold in despair.
Stop torturing me, I beg you—
your absence has gone on forever.

(D. S., Gh # 2054)

You tell me to be silent—
it is you who makes me talk.
Your love turns every hair on my body
into a verbal tongue.

(D. S., Gh # 2052)

I have assessed every human,
and decided to be with you.
I have dived in every sea,
you are the jewel I found.
I have opened every barrel
I have tasted a thousand wines—
only the taste of your spirit
possesses my mind.

(D. S., Gh # 770)

Today in the garden,
The air around you—your perfume—
made the trees dance.
They were nodding their heads,
and they were bent.

(D. S., Gh # 1181)

I have only half a mouth,
how much can I laugh?

He is head to toe in laughter,
like a tree full of flowers.

(D. S., Gh # 3385)

To my two eyes, from your two eyes,
messages are sent every moment:
May my two eyes
be drunk and joyous like yours.

(D. S., Gh # 166)

The bitterness of the beloved,
is like that of wine:
soothing on the inside,
bitter in the mouth.

(D. S., Gh # 1935)

Like the snow, I melted.
The ground sucked me in.
My heart turned to steam.
I ascended to the sky.

(D. S., Gh # 1410)

Bring the goblet!
Bring the barrel!
The cup is not enough.
I will thank your kindness.
I am your slave for life.

(D. S., Gh # 1726)

I am hard of hearing—
put your face to mine.

Tell me over and over,
what the beloved wants.

(D. S., Gh # 2227)

The tulip springs from the soil
with love, and filled with blood.
It leaves the world, just the same,
with a bloody skirt, in love.

(D. S., Gh # 830)

It is night-time,
time for privacy.
The face of the moon,
the Mecca of lovers, is out.
Moon worshipers watch.
The moon begins to smile.
Night-walkers arise,
time to start the march.

(D. S., Gh # 832)

I wonder why the sweet beloved
used indecent words.
I bet he did it,
to settle my restless soul.

(D. S., Gh # 795)

Dark will be the morning,
when you do not greet.
Bitter is a day,
when the sweetness of your words
does not reach my ears.

(D. S., Gh # 796)

Come through my soul
one morning, like the spring.
Come, replace the autumn
in the garden of my soul.

(D. S., Gh # 781)

Come; come like a rain-filled cloud.
Come, you are the rapture in lovers, come.
Come, the king of the drunks will salute you!
Come.

(D. S., Gh # 533)

In a garden, the red rose proclaims:
Come, smell my mouth
and tell me what it's like.
Like a mirror, silent;
like a scale that talks.
The ground shies away.
She still wants to talk.

(D. S., Gh # 933)

A thousand barrels of wine
will not break my languish.
My heart is drunk
with those intoxicating eyes.

(D. S., Gh # 922)

Were it not for your drunken eyes,
there would be no joy in wine.
If you do not accompany me,
what good is it to travel?
If not for the sun of your soul,

where would be the sunlight?
If you are not the view I see
what is the purpose of eyesight?
If the news does not hold his secret
lets go and get drunk.
If you don't anchor the news
what good would that do?

(D. S., Gh # 936)

Compare the above ghazal by Molana to the one below by Saadi:

Eyesight is good for seeing the beloved.
If it does not see her
what good is it to have eyes?

(Saadi, Gh # 485)

Poets have spoken a lot about using their wisdom and knowledge to run away from love; however, love can become so overwhelming that wisdom grows silent. Here are some verses for comparison that come to mind:
Nezami:

As I pray every night,
to let go of your love,
when I lift my head up,
all over again, I'm in love.

(Nezami)

Saadi:

Every night I make a new decision
that tomorrow I will leave
and go some place where you are not.

In the morning
when I am about to leave,
my promise does not allow me
to take one more step from my house.

(Saadi, Gh # 766)

Hallali[14] :

Every night I say,
I will leave this thought.
Again when it is tomorrow,
I say next day, next day.
Since your thought has been with me,
from the very beginning;
it is better if I leave this
idea entirely, all together.

Hallali again:

My friends tell me
stay away from calamity.
The calamity is my own heart.
How can I live without it?

When the same concept comes out of Jallal ud Din Mohammad's mouth, it is fire:

Whenever I run from you,
I struggle with your love.
In my head from six directions
comes the force of your love.

(D. S., Gh # 620)

---

[14] Hallali. Poet in the 6th century Hejira. He was famous for his extraordinary good looks and his romantic poems.

Comparing Molana's poems with those of other poets on the same matters makes the difference between them clearly apparent. What I have quoted here is a spontaneous set of comparisons based on memory.

The pleasure of his obscenity,
surpasses the joy of prayer;
the thorn of the sorrow of his love,
exceeds the softness of a flower.

(D. S., Gh # 420)

Compare Molana's ghazal to the one below by Saadi:

Thanks to you, the poison is my medicine,
obscenity from your mouth,
holy words of prayer.

(Saadi, Gh # 518)

And to Hafez's ghazal below:

Sugar and spice is not a treat for me.
Mix kisses with obscenity: that will cure my aching heart.

(Hafez, Gh # 182)

Where the contents of verses are similar, the difference between Molana's style and that of others becomes apparent through this delicate matter: in Molana's language there are buried allegories that usually pertain to a spiritual matter. For example, if after a thousand years, the beloved passes the lover's grave, the soil of his grave smells of perfume and his body turns

into soul. In the language of Hafez and Saadi, the decayed bones start dancing. Sometimes, however, in order to visualize a spiritual concept Molana commits to tangible and concrete examples. Again, we see the power of interpretation inherent in his language; therefore, we must assume that the effect of his language stems from the fact that he avoids the ordinary. Naturally, his powerful feelings create new interpretations.

As Saaeb says:

This holy cup holds a different kind of wine.

Saaeb is responding to the following ghazal in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*:

Today your face has a different look.
Today your sweet lips
have a different flavor.
You can see in the eyes
of that brave gazelle,
that he holds a different mirror
up to this world and to the other.
In the sea of both his eyes
looking for the jewel,
not knowing after the search,
the pearl is in another sea...

(D. S., Gh # 594)

V

Gnosticism in the Face of Love

In the midst of a bloody scene
love creates a flowery field.
The lovers have their love,
and nothing else, no doubt.
Wisdom puts a limit to our senses,
no other ways but six.
Love claims there are more ways,
ways that he has experienced.
Wisdom found a new market;
started to do business;
love foresaw much more,
beyond what mind had seen.
Mansoor, hiding, but with a trust in love
abandoned his preaching position,
and was hung to death.
Wisdom says,
"Do not step that way,"
death is filled with thorns.
Love responds to wisdom,
"You are the one with thorns."
All else is a mistake.

(D. S., Gh # 132)

As the blood boils within me,
I cover it up with poetry.
The bag of musk is filled with blood.
The clothes still remain bloody.

(D. S., Gh # 2807)

Jallal ud Din has mixed lyric poetry with mysticism in a very unique way. He has expressed Gnostic meanings in rhythmic and romantic language. Understanding this language is exclusive to people with a very special taste and a very delicate nature—people who look for mysticism in music and in poetry.

Few people seek out Gnosticism or are in search of what points in a spiritual direction. In the relatively limited society of such people, the *Mathnavi* is, however, very common. The *Mathnavi* has over-shadowed many spiritual books; that is why it has been reprinted more than any other Gnostic text.

Many people—those who are not concerned with Gnosticism—look for music in a ghazal. In this respect Saadi, and later Hafez (who brought Gnostic matters into his ghazals in a balanced and covert style), have satisfied this group's tastes and have become the exclusive poets of their gatherings. Other mystic poets, even Iraqi,[1] whose fluency of language is close to Saadi's, have been over-shadowed by Saadi and Hafez.

Perhaps the political and social conditions at the end of

[1] Iraqi, Fakhr ud Din Abraham Hamedani (1289-1313). A well-known dervish and a Gnostic poet of Iran.

the Mongol Dynasty[2] and during the Safavid[3] era, when the mullahs had gained power and opposed the Sufis, contributed to the lack of attention given to great Sufi literature. Surely at a time when the ghazals of Attar and Iraqi were not popular, the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* would have been ignored.

The collections of ghazals by both Attar and Iraqi include Gnostic matters that also exist in the *Divan-e Shams*. All these works are composed of Sufi and romantic ghazals, with the difference that in the language of Jallal ud Din Mohammad, mysticism has taken the form of romantic fervor and attraction. Even Gnostic thoughts have lost their philosophical coloring and have adopted the shape of passion.

In Attar's collection of ghazals, the main theme is mysticism, and ghazals are used to polish and to beautify the mystical intent. In Iraqi's collection, the main purpose is the composition of ghazals; Gnostic thoughts are there to give the poetry more grace and charm. Both poets possess an excellent style, and their work is full of meaning, and one can feel that in the works of both, art and technique exist side by side. Many of the *Divan-e Shams* ghazals, however, are like continuing waves that have slammed against the rocks of the mind:

> Oh my love,
> my carefree love,

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[2] The Mongols. A group of tribes who lived in Central and Eastern Asia. There were many families in these tribes and they were always fighting amongst themselves and with their neighbors. Hulegu, a son of Tului (the youngest son of Genghis Khan) conquered Iran in the 1250s. Hulegu's conquest resulted in the creation of a kingdom of nearly independent rulers, the Il-Khans of Persia, which lasted until 1353.

[3] The Safavid Dynasty. Ruled Iran from 1502-1736. During this time the Afghans conquered Iran. The Safavid kings developed the country a great deal and paid special attention to culture, art and foreign relations, especially with European countries.

your separation,
my intimacy;
your kindness,
my compassion.
How good you are to me;
how well you treat me.
You are my religion,
you are my sole belief.
You are filled with treasure,
you are my endless sea.
My soul, my soul,
my king, my king,
above and beyond my imagination,
you are a torch
to the one who wonders at night.
You are a chain to bind a crazy soul;
you are the ultimate destination
for all who travel.
You are the leader
of my caravan.
He tells me to come,
tell me how it is.
I say, "I am speechless, when I come to you."
He tells me, "Don't shy away, come, come my tricky slave, come."

(D. S., Gh # 1798)

I tell my consciousness to let go.
I tell my ears to hear the good news.
I tell my wisdom to be satisfied.
I tell my eyes to see the fortune.
I was burning with desire.
I had made bags to collect.
I will stop being a beggar now.
I now have all the treasure I want.

Next to your supreme wisdom,
I am pure instinct.
Like a child and from childhood,
I still chew on my sleeves.

(D. S., Gh # 1793)

No poetry of a desperate lover, no ecstatic lyric of any possessed Sufi has this fire, this mixture of love and philosophy, this heedlessness to all that is not love.

The interesting thing is that in the *Divan-e Shams*, there are not many simple ghazals, that is, poems that only show the feelings and instincts of human beings. Even though the language is the conventional language of ghazals and is saturated with love and drunkenness, Gnostic thinking and spiritual leaping are apparent in them: they are more rhythmic than Attar's, more spiritual than Iraqi's, and the direction towards spirituality is more understood than by anyone else. Gnostic matters and divine indications are not expressed in the simple style of a Sufi; they are rather expressed with the fire of one, madly in love:

Today this house is filled with your air.
Every corner I turn, I see a trace of my beloved.
This perfume is making me drunk,
turning the blood in my body into an intoxicating wine,
making every strand of my hair fall
like a Hindu—
completely drunk.

(D. S., Gh # 2633)

The house has the fragrance of the beloved; up the walls there ascends an intoxicating aroma. He is drunk from the

perfume, drunk to the point that he imagines wine running through his veins in place of blood.

Most Iranian Gnostics have spoken about the same thing: the Absolute Being has shed Light on this house and on the universe, and the universe is nothing but a manifestation of His Light. However, what is distinguished, innovative and strong in Molana's version of this matter is his feeling and not so much the matter itself. His ideas are attractive because they reflect the excitement in his soul. The fragrance from his beloved is intoxicating to such a degree that he imagines his blood to be wine, making him drunk and causing every strand of his hair to fall like a drunken Hindu.

If a drunk talks when he is drunk, he says what he feels without a sign of reason or logic; he cannot find the proper words or construct sentences or syllogisms. An involuntary urge draws him to show the images that are found in his excited mind. We find the same spontaneity in reading Molana's verses. He has not weighed his sentences to see which one shows his rapture better. He does not consider whether it is better to say, "I got drunk from this aroma" or "this perfume is making me drunk/turning the blood in my body into an intoxicating wine."

When we read the *Divan-e Shams,* again and again, we come to the same conclusion that Molana does not search for sentences; he finds himself in a condition and wants to verbalize that condition. What he says is how he has seen himself. There are many verses in the *Divan-e Shams* that reflect this rapture, absolute commitment and saturation with love:

> Can you not tell?
> I have no veins in my body.

I could not care less
if I see a vein pop up.
Show one to me,
so I can take it out completely.

(D. S., Gh # 1708)

You are the wine,
the seducer of man and woman—
come break my door down tonight,
take my clothes,
take all that belongs to me.
You are the maiden, the cupbearer of wine.
Drink half yourself—
give the rest to us.
No, no.
My mistake.
Please give it to us all.
If you want to see the water,
turn to the water of life;
pour a cup of your wine into the sea.
If you want the moon and Venus
to come down as birds,
with wine in your hands
throw some into the air—
make them all drunk.
If you want to see in one moment
one hundred idols,
drink this wine and
take a look around.

(D. S., Gh # 2302)

The father of Persian poetry, Rudaki, has also described wine like this, but somehow the warmth of Molana's language is missing:

If, from this wine,
a drop is spilled in the Nile,
the whale will be drunk
for a hundred years thereon.
If a gazelle in the plain
drinks from this wine,
he'll turn into a roaring lion,
and no longer fear the tiger.

(Rudaki, Gh # 77)

In expressing mystic thoughts, the language of Molana bubbles over with love. The wine that has intoxicated him and left him longing for more, is so potent that if a glass of it is poured in the salty sea, it will turn the sea to the water of life, and if thrown to the sky, the moon and Venus become drunk and fall down like birds.

Such strong and powerful interpretations of the effects of wine cannot be found in any other poetry—even in the works of poets who are famous for their poems on wine. The great literary man, Saaber, writes about the same concept, yet with all its ripeness and rhythmic balance, it does not possess the warmth of Molana's language:

Give a drop of it to the plains,
and turn them to a field of tulips.
Give a sip to the Jayhoon
and give her a rosy cheek.

(Attributed to Molana)

Where do Molana's strong interpretations originate from? Is it that instead of being content with a mere description

of the color of wine and its superficial power, which turns the plains into a field of tulips or the Jayhoon River red, he is aware of the spiritual and true effect of the wine which turns the salty sea into the water of life and brings down the moon and Venus like birds from the sky? Or, is it because of the holy aspect of Molana's poetry that the reader considers other poets' interpretation as poetic exaggeration while considering Molana's to be spiritual, mental interpretations worthy of reality? It is obvious that a glass of wine cannot turn the Jayhoon red nor can it make a plain the color of tulips, although one sip of the "wine" that Jallal ud Din Mohammad speaks about is enough to turn the universe upside down. The Koran says, "kon fi ya coon" (God said, "Let there be" and it became a divine order).

The strength and distinctiveness of Molana's verse is mostly in its content. There is something in his soul that overflows and that makes him commit to all kinds of expressions:

I am the servant of the moon—
do not say another word but the word "moon."
In my presence, speak about
sweet essence
and nothing else.
Last night,
I lost my mind.
Love saw me and said:
"I am here—don't scream!
Don't tear off your clothes!
Say nothing else."
I said, "Love, I am in fear of something else."
He said, "Don't fear, there is nothing else.
I will whisper into your ears

words of hidden secrets.
Nod your head to say yes—
don't speak but by that gesture."
A moon, filled with life,
was found on the way of my heart.
How delicate traveling is.
Don't say anything else.
I asked, "Is this man or angel,
I wonder."
It said, "This is not an angel, not a man.
Don't say anything else."
I begged, "What is it then, please say—
I will be turned up side down."
It said, "Be it! Be up side down and don't say anything else."
"You who sit in this fancy house,
get up, leave, and go from this house!
Take your stuff
and say nothing else."

(D. S., Gh # 2119)

Without his thought in my mind—
that very essence of the universe—
I would hate the universe, my soul and myself.
I am a slave to the one
who gives me joy
day and night.
He said, "If my compassion is in your head,
I will not leave a strand of hair upon it."
I told him, "Whatever belongs to me that you choose to burn
will turn into smoke.
That is the smoke of my burning love,
that would be my impression."

(D. S., Gh # 1679)

The charm and the fascination of the *Divan-e Shams* do not originate from the art of poetry. The secret of its power and attraction is not in its Gnostic meanings either. It is rather because its ghazals, like a suspended rope, connect us to unknown zones in a stormy sea. They are strings filled with music being played by feverish fingers. They are the pulse of the heart and the mirror of a soul, filled Molana's love and passion.

Very seldom has poetry been the mirror of a poet's soul to such an extent that the technique of poetry itself has not played a major role in its composition. In this regard perhaps a handful of poems in Khayyam's *Rubaiaat* are comparable to Jallal ud Din Mohammad's. Even though these two poets are polar opposites, a ground for comparison might be that Khayyam's *Rubaiaat* is also a complete mirror of his soul. The difference, however, is that in Khayyam's poetry the thoughts and vibrations of a restless soul are treated realistically and are with disappointment, whereas in the *Divan-e Shams* a tornado of rapture and affection is turning. Thoughts, art and a certain kind of logic are twisted together and taken up by this tornado. In Molana's words, this tornado "takes them to where he is longing to go," he is all hope, and this hope rolls within his limitless love:

Time has come to be crazy for you;
time to break the chains,
time to depart from everyone,
time to leave life all together
in order not to be its slave.
Time to burn the house down,
to be worthy of the lips
of the cupbearer, the cup, and the wine.

We must boil, evaporate,
and come out of this world.
On the path to annihilation
we should spread our wings
like trees in a garden—if not,
we will be strewn on the path
like seeds.
We are like the story of the heart—
no beginning, no end—
until we reside
in the lover's heart
and become a legend.

(D. S., Gh # 1649)

The warm and roaring wave that we feel in the *Divan-e Shams* is not drawn from philosophical thinking, but from something rather more vague, far-reaching and much stronger.

Love is the axis of a vast circle within which the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* and even the *Mathnavi* are lost. The true nature of this love is hidden from us because it is held apart from all the characteristics and descriptions we have heard so far. It springs from human love. We hear the roaring sound of the sea, but we do not see it.

Love is one of the strongest incentives for mankind. It becomes the reason for many incidents. It causes incredible behavior. And, it can be the source of magnificent works of art. The kind of love that has moved Jallal ud Din is as complicated as a puzzle. Our minds are powerless to explore it. This may be because his love does not empower itself by the same elements that untamed erotic passion feeds on.

Untamed love could be called a type of mental illness. Its basis is usually sexual instinct; it rejoices in beauty. However,

other strong emotions, such as self-centeredness, revenge, selfishness and the desire to boast mix with sexuality and the desire for beauty, turning into an untamed monster who wakes up within a person. Conquering this monster becomes a challenge.

A storm filled with electricity begins in the space of the unconscious mind and explodes like thunder, forcing us humans to engage in extraordinary behavior. These reactions by someone who is full of lust and far from luminous wisdom are understandable. Why should they appear now in one who is far from animal and even most human instincts and has experienced the supernatural?

What factors bring about such excitement and such obsession, where all other considerations, all other desires, burn away and leave nothing but a holy goal? What incapacitates our logic and reason and complicates our comprehension is this matter? Without a doubt "love" is the center of the circle of Jallal ud Din's soul. Whatever he says whatever he touches, and any direction he takes runs along this axis:

> The secret of love cannot be spoken about.
> I have a seal on my mouth.
> In the middle of the night, last night
> your love came up to me
> from the secret passage way, my soul.
> The bird of my heart was the usual wanderer
> looking for love.
> It hugged and embraced that love.
> Wisdom and soul became knife and bone.
> If you could leave your self
> you would be eternal in eternity.
> Since words don't keep your secrets,

I close my mouth and let my pen talk.

(Attributed to Molana)

My job is to mind my business.
I am in love and I am proud.
I have no better relatives,
my people are the children born of love.
I am residing on your shore,
I am drunk,
even though no one is beside me.
I don't need to beg for a drop of spirit,
wine from the sky pours down on me.
Don't blame me for loosing my dignity—
your wine scattered Mt. Sinai!
Like the sun I will conquer the world,
no matter I've no army or horsemen.
Like sugar I mix with your flower.
No wonder I have no thorns.

(D. S., Gh # 506)

There are times when the fire elevates, the language becomes sweeter and takes off towards the ambiguous, surpassing ordinary rules and regulations:

Ah, you heat of the fire,
come burn this house down.
Take my wisdom from me,
drive me crazy.
Break the door to the tavern,
gently take the wine.
Change this whole story—
turn my devotion to God,
turn it into a myth.
Wine bearer; serve me with wine,

take my peace away,
take away my mind.
Leave the religion,
leave Islam!
Turn Mecca into a house of idols!
Shams-e Tabrizi come.
I am weary of myself.
Set my mind on fire,
drive me crazy one more time.

(Attributed to Molana)

This incredible fire at times takes a different color, as if the attention of the self upon one point and the concentration of thoughts upon one matter induce selflessness, as if a burning breath has breathed on it and burnt up its self-identity. Molana assumes himself to have become otherwise. "He" has overwhelmed his existence in such a way that he has jumped out of his own being and left all his individuality for his beloved.

Iron is obliterated in the color of fire.
It boasts that is fire,
acquires magnificence and glory
from the nature of fire
—goes around and says
"I am fire.
I am fire."

(D. S., Gh # 197)

Without analysis, some of the ghazals of the *Divan-e Shams* remain unexplained. From the brave tone of the ghazals below, we hear music as if coming from a mysterious zone in another world. An infinitive rapture and an engaged soul: all

improbable things become possible, all sufferings, joys and all pains have been seized. A world filled with light, all waves and selflessness appears where the validity of insignificant human life cancels out and disappears:

If you are in love with me I shall disperse you.
If you build upon this love,
I will destroy all you've constructed.
If you make a hundred rooms like bees do,
I will make you homeless like the flies.
You struggle to impress others—
my purpose is to leave you in awe.
You are a friend of God,
don't fear the fire.
I will turn the fire to fields of flowers.
If you are the peak of Mt. Ghaaf, [4]
I will put you on the wheel
and turn you upside down.
If you were an oyster
coming to my sea,
I will insert pearls inside your shell,
fill you up with jewels.
No blade can touch your throat, ever.
Even if I sacrifice you like Ishmael,[5]
I sacrifice your body.
Hold on to my skirt
like the moon does.
See how I pour light all over your skirt?
How long would you be a slave
to other people?
Free yourself and meet me there.

[4] Ghaaf. A fabulous mountain believed to surround the world. The Fabulous Bird (Angha) is said to have lived on this mountain.

[5] Ishmael. The first king of the Safavid Dynasty.

Stop reading all that is written;
I will make them all like the Koran,
only if I know that you are indeed in love.
I will show you my face,
I will put you in awe.
If you are a Plato or Loghman[6] in knowledge,
I will give you a lesson
to forget all that you have learned.

(D. S., Gh # 1665)

The person who recites these poems is no longer Jallal ud Din Mohammad, the son of Baha Ud Din Walad[7] who lives in Konya, the man who instructs in Islam from the pulpit. He is rather free from himself and has become one with "the pre-existence." That is the reason he fearlessly says:

The Ahmad I am today
is not the same as the one that was last year.
Today I am the fabulous
monstrous bird[8] —
not a little bird on any old wall of clay!
From the drink of life,
the holy water,
each took a sip from a cup.
I on the other hand
drank it from the barrel and with a jar.
I am the dream of every soul.
I am the Mecca of every heart.

---

[6] Loghman. A celebrated Eastern philosopher, sometimes identified with Aesop. He was originally from Habasheh, Africa and lived at the time of David the Prophet.

[7] Baha ud Din Walad. Molana's father, a well-known Iranian Gnostic. He left Iran when the Mongols attacked, and migrated to Iraq with his son Molana. After some years in Baghdad, by invitation of King Alaa Kayghobad, he settled in Konya.

[8] The Fabulous Bird, Angha. A legendary bird that lived on the Fabulous Mountain, Ghaaf. It is said that this bird raised Zaal, (Rostam's father) as a child.

I am the mosque of ultimate height,
not merely the Friday Mosque.

(D. S., Gh # 3387)

It is difficult to analyze these phenomena. As in all matters related to man's complicated soul, when logic attempts to define them by its own standards it fails. All that is said about them is nothing but assumptions and guesses.

In our soul, two separate faculties exist. The faculty of intellect and reason exists along with the faculty of feeling and emotion. In the faculty of reason, science and knowledge have developed; in the faculty of emotion, we find our political, religious, and social beliefs.

This second faculty is more original and ancient and naturally more effective in human life, since it existed before reason and is the source of instinct, lust, and unconscious desires. Its realm is vaster and its demands more forceful than those of intelligence. This faculty is at the root of most historical events such as wars, revolutions, atrocities, and political and religious movements. Unreasonable religious, racial and national prejudices and most illusions and superstitions originate from the faculty of feeling and emotion.

The human being absurdly assumes his actions are based upon wisdom. He is more humbled by his emotions and more so a prisoner of the dark side of his being than an animal is of its instincts. Except in scientific matters, the voice of logic, in its attempt to determine the course of history and the destiny of an individual's life, is often much too weak to reach us.

This explains and excuses many complicated, irresolvable human issues. We can understand why there are so

many different religions and discrepancies in human beliefs; why the wise and thinking human race commits such foolish acts; why superstitions and delusions find their way into scientific minds; why there are so many restrictions imposed by human society—restrictions that are merely due to the extreme weakness of the mind that can barely tolerate any kind of logic.

Undoubtedly, many complicated questions about the human soul can be explained by this view. Basic instincts and lusts on the one hand and the power of understanding on the other are in constant conflict. To resolve the conflict, either the power of instinct must weaken to allow the mind to dictate its orders, or the strength of reason must become strong enough to quiet down the maddening voice of the lusts. But this rarely happens. The conflict is rarely resolved. The human puzzle remains.

The human essence—the mental faculty that distinguishes man from other animals—is a space open to incomprehensible manifestations. Even in this luminous area of perception there exist dark corners that are the source of many complications. Because we are intelligent, we think about the secrets of creation, about life and death. Because we think, we feel the magnificence of the universe. Because we think, we do not want to assume that creation is but a confused mechanical entity. It is also our power of thinking that does not allow us to be content, like other animals, with our instinctive needs. Since our perception cannot penetrate the realm of metaphysics, the imagination goes to work. With the activation of imagination as a world of fantasy in the form of philosophical hypotheses, a zoo of strange beliefs and all kinds of delusions and superstitions are established. The history of philosophy and of

human beliefs is nothing but a history of this wandering imagination and this restless mind.

The anxious, imaginative soul, the entity that has been stunned and confused by its vision of the secret of the world of the Being, and because of his desire for perfection, cannot rest within a religious system, has himself become an authority in philosophical and Gnostic thinking, manifesting through the appearance of spiritual poems such as Sanai's, Attar's, and Molana's with this distinction: that Jallal ud Din has climbed this mysterious world of fantasy more than the others. He has forgotten the rude and immature commotion of the mind, as if a magical sun—a sun that is invisible to the ordinary person—shines in his world. It is as if he has come close to the Absolute Light, a Light that burns away all anxieties and all worrisome imaginations. In this mental ascension, higher than the clouds, beyond electricity, the moon and the universe, Molana has seen himself as entirely composed of love, wisdom and life:

> More than a cloud, more than the lightning,
> I am more than the moon,
> I am higher than the Great Wheel.
> I am all love, all wisdom,
> and all soul,
> for your soul.
>
> (Attributed to Molana)

In the heat of this flight towards the Absolute Being, dreadful prejudice burns out. The weak, close-minded and ignorant man disappears, and instead, the face of a complete human being, the grand and the excellent human, the human freed from the prison of beliefs appears in the *Divan-e Shams*:

From the heavens I will not take food.
I shall close my mouth.
If my stomach cries,
I, the imposter, will laugh.
I'm like a drunken canary—
I broke out of my cage.
I flew high,
saying I am higher than the sky.
I am too drunk to ever be sober.
Neither water nor fire comes close to me.
I am taken by insanity—
a mad man in chains.
If I have pride, it is because I am like a reed:
you blow inside me, and that gives me pride.
You are of me, for that I boast.
Like incense if I burn with your passion,
I burn smelling good.
If I laugh with joy like an instrument,
it is not for the New Year's celebration.
I won't scratch my head thinking,
I only want your love.
I am not aware of my being,
my heart is filled with your love.
All souls are my slaves
now that I am in rapture with you.
If I take poison,
that poison will not harm me,
if it has come from you.

(D. S., Gh # 1607)

He is the only searcher in the world—
this world and that world are of the same jewel.
In reality,
religion, faith

are the same as blasphemy.

(D. S., Gh # 425)

Molana frankly and fearlessly says:

I don't have the mark of a Moslem or a heathen.
I despise both cloak and holy girdle.

(Attributed to Molana)

Small-minded people, people imprisoned by instruction, tried to cast Molana into their own narrow and choking mold. So that they and their small-brained co-religionists might boast about him, Afghani Hanafite[9] called him "Hanafite" because his father belonged to that sect. The Shiites of Isfahan[10] declared Jallal ud Din Mohammad to be a Ghalandar[11], because some dervishes in the Safavid era included some poorly written ghazals—doubtfully the work of Molana—in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*. They accused him of using Ali's name (may peace be upon him) for beggary. But he, Jallal ud Din Mohammad, the magnificent, the great, Jallal ud Din, the captive of beauty, Jallal ud Din, dazzled by Absolute Light wanders in his distant orbit. In the sphere of love and rapture he goes further and further away from all these designations. He cries out:

Lovers, O lovers, I have lost my cup,
I have drunk from the wine
that does not fit in a cup.
I have blossomed with sweethearts and rosy cheeks.

---

[9] Afghani Hanafite: they were the followers of the Hanafite sect of Islam.
[10] Isfahan. A major city in Iran and the capital city of the Safavid era.
[11] Ghalandar. Or Calender, is a wondering dervish or fakir.

I have withdrawn like autumn
with evil-minded deniers.
I hung my reason,
hoping it would give me awareness.
I am now reluctant to reason:
this reasoning has made me depressed.
I am holding on to this cup instead;
I have executed the reason.
I have joined my beloved
behind the curtain,
I am with him.
Time is my time now—
life is going on my way.
In having no abode,
I have given orders,
from my soul.
In my body, another soul.
With that, I am
a different one,
because now
I know what's going on.

(D. S., Gh # 1371)

The ascetics and the devout, as well as some of the orthodox Sufis like those in the first centuries (Hejira) were all captives of their own anxious souls, as if a sort of hardening in their religious beliefs and their images of the life after death troubled them. A disturbing nightmare from the metaphysical world tortured their minds. In their feverish minds, the Eternal Face—the Face that in Jallal ud Din's dreams is absolute beauty and pure blessing and mercy, much like the image that Christ had in mind of the Holy Father—turns into a forceful, revengeful and needy God.

For example, the following metaphor from the *Tazkarat ul Olya by* Attar tries to show the virtues of positive insight:

"It has been said about a Khajeh Hassan that he had sat on his roof top crying so hard that his tears ran into the gutter. The tears sprinkled on a passerby. The man asked, "Is this water clean?" Khajeh Hassan responded, "Wash with it, as it is the tears of sinful eyes."

There is no doubt about the weakness of this narrative. All the bodily fluid of the ascetic Khajeh Hassan would not have been sufficient to wet the roof, let alone pour down the gutter! This type of illogical metaphor comes from our infirm thinking. We think that in order to show quality we must resort to quantity; the degree of devotion and godliness is demonstrated by the quantity of tears.

There are many legends to explain the virtues of saints. But, when reading these legends one concludes that most of these saints who feared God and cried for their uncommitted sins, were either thieves and cheaters, or contaminated with debauchery and wickedness, or they belonged to the class of the oppressed and the wretched. Therefore, one is forced to assume that they thought about God in a manner different from what a healthy mind would imagine and the Koran teaches. Their God is made of images of tyrants, and obstinate or cruel kings: a more powerful Genghis Khan or Timur Lenk,[12] ever more influential, endlessly cruel, selfish and uncaring about human dreams. This is not surprising or unnatural. All nations compare the Divine Court with their own governments. Since the government of each people is a byproduct of their way of

[12] Timu Lenk (1336-1405). Or Tamerlane. One of the fieriest and most successful of the conquerors of Central Asia. He invaded Fars (southern Persia) in 1394 and Eastern Persia in 1398.

philosophy, it is natural for them to see God according to their viewpoint; that is why one religion takes on different shapes in different cultures. That revengeful, cruel being who brought so many tears to Khajeh Hassan, to the extent that tears ran through the gutter, takes a different form in Jallal ud Din's imagination. It becomes all kindness and rapture; it brings about love and passion and thrills his soul with happiness and love:

O the enemy of my wisdom.
O the anesthetic to my consciousness!
I am the barrel.
You boil inside me like wine.
You are the beginning,
you are the end;
you are a hidden secret,
you are what is there.
Out in the open you are the apparent.
You are the king—
the king of kings too,
the door keeper
and the leader both.
You are heartbreak and also compassionate.
Both the handsome Joseph
and the cover and hijab too.
So fresh, so green,
so beautiful,
so elegant,
like the brain inside this skull,
like the ringing inside my ears,
both distant and intimate,
so near and so plentiful.
The evil-minded lover,
the sting and sweet desire too...

(D. S., Gh # 2602)

The candle, the wine, and the beloved,
you are all three at once.
You are Spring in the midst of Winter.
The fire in your breath
always blows inside the reed.
The reed got its sweet desire from your passionate zeal.
On the night of ascension
Mohammad traveled a hundred years.

(D. S., Gh # 2922)

The disordered imagination led people like Malek Dinar[13] and Khajeh Abdollah Ansaari[14] to objectivity and affliction, yet love gave Jallal ud Din pride and ambition and flew in the space of his imagination:

Like a spiral upward,
I am elevating from below;
reaching for my slender sweetheart.
Beyond my soul, I am aware of someone.
I am going back to where I came from.
I was four, then three, now I am two!
I have passed duality—
now I am only one.
I traveled backward a hundred years and more;
I have gone past Eve and Adam.
Like a strand of hair,
At some time I became so narrow,
I penetrated inside my beautiful idol.
I was drowned with fear for a while—
then I traveled to the no-fear land of God.
I was immaturely sour in his vineyard.
In time I ripened

[13] Malek Dinar. He was one of the princes of Ghazna Dynasty, 1484.

[14] Khajeh Abdollah Ansaari, (1006-1088). Famous Iranian Gnostic poet and theologian known as the "Old Man of Herat."

and turned to red wine.

(Attributed to Molana)

The reason for this difference is very apparent. The essence of God in Jallal ud Din was pure goodness. A person on an upward spiral only receives goodness and adores love. Love of goodness and beauty by itself enlightens and polishes the soul, because there are magnetic forces between the attractive and the attracted (the possessed). Molana himself has pointed this out repeatedly both in the *Mathnavi* and in the *Divan-e Shams* and has called love the secret to joy, happiness and freedom from sadness and affliction:

Because the sun is shining beyond the skies,
happiness is upon me.
As I journey from here to there
I am lost in meanings.
I am happier like this.
I shall not return to matter;
I will not look down to earth.
I shall melt in meaning,
to be of the same shade,
just like the sugar,
that melts in the water.
If this wave breaks my body,
like a wrecked ship broken into splinters of wood,
I shall let go of everything,
for now I am floating,
and I can anchor myself.

(D. S., Gh # 1590)

Love is better than this,
who can deny it?

Let the denier but taste this love,
and his eyes will turn to belief.
Love is a treasure,
it brings out your art.
Love is a gold mine,
it brings out your beauty.
When love opens two lips,
such fragrance is released;
musk gets all bedazzled.
Shies away ambergris.

(D. S., Gh # 1819)

Take away this torn bread
my soul will never tear.
The rapture of my loving
will never wander.
If I am in charge of the hiring,
no one will ever be fired.
One, whose solution is I,
will never become hopeless.
One whom I am to cover,
will never be left naked.
A stone when turned to a jewel,
will never return to stone.
A lover might become very ill,
but never will die of illness.
The moon might wane very thin
but will never be a star.

(D. S., Gh # 610)

In the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, there is no crying or sobbing. There is no crying about destiny or all the hardship awaiting us in the other world. If there is ever a mention of tears,

they are for the departure of a lover or the description of a love-filled soul:

> Shams-e Tabrizi is gone—
> is someone there to cry,
> for the pride of humanity?
> The world of meaning is celebrating
> yet without him, this world is in mourning.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2893)

The world of meaning is delighted about Shams-e Tabrizi's death, since he has escaped the prison of the body. In this regard, Molana himself is happy too, but because he is still imprisoned by *his* physical body, he is sorrowful about Shams-e Tabrizi's death. However, he never cries because he fears God, since to him, God is pure light. Molana is in love with this image, madly in love. His soul is filled with love and hope; that is why he always speaks about joy and laughter:

> To sadness I say:
> "Turn as thin as a strand of hair,
> you may not enter my mind.
> In the sweetness of security
> there is no room for the sour taste of doubt.
> Sorrow enters a heart
> which is empty of his desire.
> Sadness goes where
> the idol is missing."
> To you, sadness, I say:
> "If you turn to gold
> if you taste like sugar,
> I will close my mouth and will say,
> This gentleman does not take sugar."

In my heart, if there is tightness,
it is of the stickiness of his sweetness.
If there is thought of going on a journey
ever in my mind
it is only to see the beloved.
His face, the eternal moon,
his breath all songs and poems.
The ones who cannot be intimate enough to see his face—
shall only smell his breath.

(D. S., Gh # 469, 470)

Laughing wholesomely like a flower,
yet not from my mouth,
for I am without me
alone with the King of Kings.

(D. S., Gh # 84)

When the King arrives,
for no apparent reason,
laugh at both cause and effect.
If evil takes over
a nasty soul,
laugh at the dishonored
and the contemptible too.

(D. S., Gh # 661)

Jallal ud Din saw no reason to cry. He believed that laughter is not only a manifestation of faith, but also its definite outcome:

Whoever God gives joy to—
laughter pours from his mouth.
If you are a denier,

I am all confession of Him.

(D. S., Gh # 2142)

Like a mother,
worried over her child
we shiver over our belief.
Why should that delicate soul shiver
when he is all belief?

(D. S., Gh # 2370)

Existence is only a manifestation of the Supreme Being, therefore everything is beautiful and everything is exhilarating. Besides laughter and hope, there is nothing else left for us to do, because from the eternal elegance, there is no other reflection than beauty and goodness. That is why in the *Divan-e Shams* there are many ghazals ringing with laughter. Read his beautiful poem and compare it with Khajeh Hassan's tears of fear running down into the gutter:

He made this world like a paradise
with sweetness, with laughter—
the one who taught me
to laugh like fire.
I was born from nothing
with a joyful heart and gay,
yet love taught me to laugh
in a completely different way.
Like an oyster I will smile,
if they crack me open.
Only the immature
laughs in time of triumph.
He taught me one night
when he came to me,

the life of all mornings and dawns,
to smile like the sunrise all the time.
Like the clouds, if I seem morose,
I am still laughing inside.
Lightning has a habit
of laughing in times of rain.
As gold laughed in the midst of fire
and said, "Show me a heart that laughs in loss."
Astronomer,
if you believe in the "split moon,"
we laugh at you
and at the sun and the moon too.

(D. S., Gh # 1989)

This very element distinguishes Molana from the great fifth century Hejira poet, the father of Gnostic poetry who was very much respected by Molana. The language of Sanai teaches or preaches Gnostic matters and enlightenment, whereas the language of Molana speaks of making love. They were believers and it can be said that they were religious men, but their style of faith was different. Disregarding the fact that Sanai had a bad reputation in the beginning of his poetic career (he wrote commendations, degraded his opponents, got drunk and flirted with the son of a butcher. The corruptions that exist in the insignificant life of an ordinary human had not left him untouched and pure like Molana). When he reached the second period of his career, Sanai's spiritual and divine beliefs began to shine in his writing. He took on the face of a preacher and a teacher; he worshiped piety and abstinence; he warned people of the punishments that will follow their sins; he relied on logic and very clearly used the fear of hell to persuade compliance with religious rules and knowledge.

But in Molana's language there is seldom a trace of fear or a suggestion of doomsday or the fire of hell. The dominant theme in his language is rapture and eagerness. Knowledge and religion are beauty. The human soul (that is, a human who is reaching for perfection) instinctively goes towards beauty. The essence of God is not a stimulant for fear and anxiety; rather it is worthy of worship and love because it is the source of beauty, goodness and perfection. This is why in the ghazals of the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* and the section of the *Mathnavi* where Molana departs from exploring the ordinations of religion, the diffusion of his natural soul takes shape and rapture and love sparkle. In his mind, knowledge and beauty are the necessity of God; therefore, there remains no ground for anxiety and fear.

Fear of calamity
was all there was,
why should we have fear now?
The calamity is here upon us.
We have no fear of hell,
no greed for heaven.
Take off your mask now.
We so desire
a glance at your face.

(Attributed to Molana)

In Molana's language, calamity is this life where we are trapped inside the material world. He considers death to be the breaking out of this prison and the starting point of real life. The shadow of fear is only here; once we pass this stage, we reach the Absolute Light and the Eternal Life.

In this regard, too, we see another part of Jallal ud Din's face. Where everyone is afraid of death, he desires it:

I dare death to come to me,
so I can embrace him tight
at my side.
I will take from him
a colorless soul
with no perfume.
He will take a garment
from me, full of color.

(D. S., Gh # 1326)

I have learned,
I have finally learned,
death is only in this life.
If I am released
from this life
I will never die.
I will be eternal.

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

The realities of life are questionable except for the reality of death. Everything passes and can be forgotten, except death. Death, like time and place, is infinite and has no beginning. In the problem-solving and searching mind of the human being, death is the only untreatable pain. It is a black and impenetrable void, beyond it absolute silence rules—a dreadful black ocean that without exception swallows all and every creature. When someone dies, everything is over, he no longer exists, and no wild dreams or crazy hopes can ever reach him.

Since death is infinite, limitless and more current and definite than any other principle of nature, all who think, all whose minds are not numbed by the narcotics of ignorance and

stupidity, suffer and are fearful of it. But in Jallal ud Din there is no sign of this suffering and anxiety:

The soul is dancing in the graveyard
happy to see a thousand relatives
without their bodies,
free.

(D. S., Gh # 1943)

You are the shadow of yourself,
you fade in sunshine.
For as long as you see only your shadow,
take a look at the sun.

(D. S., Gh # 1938)

You see me from afar
as a man walking.
What you see is only an image—
nothing but non-entity.
Come forward, become non-existent,
non-existence is the mine of life.
But not this life, filled with sadness and sorrow.
I, void of you,
you, clear of you,
will join the stream.
In this dry land there is only cruelty and tyranny.
This water will draw us
but will not kill.
This is the water of life,
full of kindness, filled with giving.
All hearts are standing erect,
worried about non-existence;
this is not "not being."
It is rather, the Garden of Eden.
The entire army of your thoughts,

under the command of fear,
a flag away from the army of non-existence.
From you to the invisible world a thousand years distance;
from the heart it is only one step

(D. S., Gh # 435)

Some think of death as the end of things. The way the elements are formed and interact determines the identity of a being. When this combination shatters, the identity vanishes and the basic elements return to their original forms. Even if these elements combine again, the new creation differs from the previous one.

Others cannot accept this hopeless fact. How can the human soul, which is the source of thinking, be destroyed? If the soul is destroyed, then what is the secret or the purpose of creation? As a result, many come to believe that death is a temporary matter, an incident or a window onto another life in which the human returns to the same characteristics.

Jallal ud Din, like many Gnostics, thinks of death as only a change in form. The human essence is an internal jewel to which death has no access. The world is constantly changing form; there is no damage to the human being due to death:

Why do you fear death?
Your soul is forever.
Do not fear the tomb's darkness,
you have the light of God in there.

(D. S., Gh # 2594)

Molana continues the theme in the *Mathnavi*:

From being an object I died.

I became a plant.
From a plant I turned into a living animal.
From being an animal, when I died,
I turned into a human.
Why should I fear death now?

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

Thus man is on a spiral upward, and any kind of death takes him closer to the Divine Source:

Firewood is a wood that does not burn:
When the wood burns,
it turns to fire.

(D. S., Gh # 3363)

Before the wood burns it is only firewood, but when it burns, it changes form and turns to fire. It floats up and reaches its origin, to the planet of fire which is above our planet of air:

Fire is capable of reaching up to its origin
like the fire from the human soul.

(D. S., Gh # 3363)

In the human soul, there is a sparkle of Absolute Light—an infinite, unlimited Light from which many burning suns are illuminated. Therefore, as Molana believes, that soul is pulled to where there is no direction:

The human mind is of a different kind
from the minds and souls of donkeys and cows.
And from the mind and soul of human kind,
different is the soul of a prophet
and messenger of God.

(D. S., Gh # 531)

The Divine Revelation,
is hidden from our minds.
This sound is from an invisible world—
it comes from there and beyond.

(The Second Book of the Mathanvi)

The soul reaches up on its wings;
the body, with nails and teeth,
holds on to the ground.
When caught together, body and soul—
lost is the soul who is lowered by the body.
The soul's desire is knowledge and learning.
Body longs for gardens,
meadows and miracles performed.

(The Fourth Book of the Mathnavi)

In talking about these matters, Molana is not trying to soothe his pain with the hope of another life. He believes in what he says. This firm belief is part of his spiritual existence; therefore, any form of death or change of form suggests an upward movement in his mind:

Flames of fire whispered
in the ears of smoke:
Did you know that the incense
is happy when it is with me,
when it burns?
It appreciates me and thanks me.
It knows that in its fana there is a profit.
All over the incense, there are tight joints;
when it reaches fana the ties open up, it is free of ties.
Bravo! My fire-eating friend,
bravo my martyr, the pride of friends.

See for yourself how the earth and the sky
are on borrowed time
from eternity.
In non-existence there is no sign
of that blindness and that darkness.
As long as the embryo is in that stage
it will not be separated from me,
will not become tall
like an evergreen,
nor will it be pretty like baby chicks.
Upon your death
the water of life will be splashed on your face.
Get up from sleep,
and receive the bowl of eternity.

(D. S., Gh # 863)

On the day of my funeral,
as my casket is carried out,
think not that I am saddened
for leaving this world.
As you see my body,
do not say, "He is gone, oh he is gone."
For I will reach and find,
only when I am gone.
If you have seen the descent,
now watch the coming up.
The dusk is not the sun or the moon's loss.
The seed will always grow when planted in soil.
Why should there be any doubt
about the growth of the human soul?
If your mouth is closed on this side,
open it from the other side.
This time your holler
will be heard in eternity.

(D. S., Gh # 911)

This contradicts Khayyam's idea:

I wish after a hundred years
there was some hope of growth,
from the heart of this soil.

(Khayyam's Rubayyat)

Because of this view of death, Molana seldom treats it as a punishment. When he talks about death, a trace of eagerness and the belief in the idea that it takes us to a higher, brighter, more beautiful, and vaster world is very apparent:

Life goes by with the hope of tomorrow,
not knowing where it goes.
Death takes us one by one
with the fear of death,
unbelievers are pale.
Death, standing on the way, waiting
The master goes only to watch.
Death, closer to us than our own thoughts,
the thoughts of nonbelievers go off so far.
Do not pamper your body so much,
your body is just a sacrifice.
Pamper your soul instead—
soul is the one going up there.
Do not give your carrion
all the sweets and butter,
the self-indulgent goes with disgrace.
Give all the good, the sweets and the butter, to your soul,
make it strong and ready
for where it eventually goes.

(D. S., Gh # 823)

In the heart of this dreamlike imagination, Molana is stunned by the negligence of others: why don't they see this blinding Light that has captured him?

Flowers and greens have the color of your face;
you are the splendor of the garden.
Why are you so rough?
If you have no concept of flowers and gardens
why then are you so sweet
so charming,
smelling like perfume?
The tent of the heart is a room for goodness
My soul,
why are you wondering?

(D. S., Gh # 3135)

You are the soul and the body, O child—
no one exists but you, O child—
Look in the mirror, see inside yourself—
no one is there beyond you, O child.
Kiss your own face
and praise yourself, O child,
it is your own image, all the good and bad.
Your shadow, O bird,
has covered both worlds, O child.

(D. S., Gh # 2148)

These verses appear as poetry, but Jallal ud Din is *saying* something. He is speaking about what other Sufis and mystics have spoken about: the magnanimity of the human essence, which is a manifestation of the Divine Light, and how due to its imprisonment in the hands of instincts, it has remained in darkness. This essence and this Light show Molana that

whatever exists originates from his own contaminated "self" and that he is searching uselessly outside himself for good and evil. This is what Hossain Ebne Mansoor Halladje said, but Molana says it in an innovative and melodic manner. There is music in Molana's words and in his spirit; he expresses the turmoil of his rapture-ridden soul. It is his unique language that drowns us in a whirlpool of warmth and rapture.

VI

The Jar of Perception is Tighter Than a Defile

If people were not veiled,
if they were not so unclean,
if their throats were not so weak, so tight,
then I would implore them.
I would use a different logic.
Your true face, Sallah ud Din, is absent
from this world.
I have kept it like a secret of love,
deep inside.
Your praise is too precious
for people in prison.
I shall save it for the society of the Divine.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

When the news of Shams ud Din reached us,
the sun in the fourth sky withdrew.
Since I mentioned his name now,
I have to give away a secret of his gift.
So that the earth and the sky can smile,
mind and soul and vision grow a hundred-fold.
How can I say it?
How can I speak?
Not a vein in my body is awake.
How can I describe a friend who has no friends?
To pray to him is to sin,
for the claim of existence is false,
next to the Absolute Being.
The sun, which shines on this world—
if it shone just a little bit more,
would burn all there is.
Do not ask for trouble, for calamity, for blood.
Do not speak of Shams-e Tabrizi.
Don't say anymore.

(The Sixth Book of the Mathnavi)

Sometimes I ask myself why the people of this land, a land that has given rise to men like Farabee,[1] Avicenna,[2] Hafez, Omar Khayyam, Sanai and Attar cannot grasp the incredibly

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[1] Farabee, Abu Nassr (874-950). An Iranian philosopher and scientist. Avicenna, confessed that this great man of knowledge was above all men in science and he considered himself a student of Farabee who was called the "Second Teacher."

[2] Avicenna (980-1037). During the Middle Ages, few scholars contributed more to science and philosophy than the Iranian scholar Avecinna. His famous books, *Canon of Medicine* and *The Book of Healing* have been translated to Latin as well as many other languages. These books served as encyclopedias covering natural science, logic, mathematics, psychology, astronomy, music, and philosophy.

complex spirituality that manifested itself through Jallal ud Din Mohammad?

Asrar Al Towhid, Fi Magham-e Sheik Abu Saiid[3] is a book written in honor of Shaik Abu Saiid by one of his grandsons. In this book, there are many narratives that remind us of Eskandar Naameh[4] and the deeds of Mehtar Nasim Ayyar.[5] For instance, there is a story about a pumice stone that flies up in the air in a public bath; and another about Sheik Abu Saiid traveling from one village to another village and rising up from the ground and walking on thin air.

Similar weak-minded and irrational stories have been written about Jallal ud Din. For instance, Aflakee quoted a story by Husam Ud Din about the following verse by Molana which has a clear meaning:

> Death cannot reach lovers.
> Love and passion
> are what kill the lovers of love.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 728)

""Following the death of Molana, Ekhtiar Ud Din was giving him a ceremonial bath and said, 'Not a drop of ablution fell on the ground because his followers took every drop for a blessing, just as believers drank the ablution water from the Prophet's

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[3] Ebne Abi Monavar. The author of *Asrar Al Towhid, Fi Magham-e Sheik Abu Saiid* about the virtues of his grandfather, Abu Saiid Abu Al Khair.
[4] *Eskandar Naameh*. A book about Alexander the Great. This book was brought to Iranian literature from Greece. It is said that Kallisthenes wrote this book, in about 935.
[5] Mehtar Nasim Ayyar. One of the main characters in *Eskandar Naameh*, he was similar to Robin Hood.

body. And when I put my hand on his holy chest, he made a big jerk that made me scream. And when I put my face on his prosperous chest and started crying, he pulled my ear with his right hand, indicating that I should be quiet. And again, I was awestruck when I heard a voice from an invisible speaker say the words of Koran: 'Behold, the friends of God have no fear and never reside to sorrow."

Obviously this entire scene is a product of Ekhtiar ud Din's imagination. Being saturated by this kind of metaphor about the deceased, together with a naive belief in the possibility of supernatural occurrences, perhaps stimulated his imagination to the point of hallucination. Other than in Ekhtiar Ud Din's imagination, Molana's chest never moved after his death, nor did he grab Ekhtiar Ud Din's ear, and no verse of the Koran was recited by an anonymous speaker. There are no logical explanations for these matters.

A tendency to accept miracles and to believe in unnatural incidents is the source of these narratives. Such narratives were also reported about the first encounter between Shams-e Tabrizi and Jallal ud Din: "When he arrived at Molana's room, he saw many books in front of him and asked, 'What is inside these books?' Molana, seeing his disheveled appearance, assumed him to be an ordinary man and said: 'Things you do not know about.' Immediately, the books were set on fire. Molana screamed and lost consciousness."

In a different narrative, Shams-e Tabrizi removed the books from in front of Molana and threw them in the water. Molana reproved him and was very hurt since some of his father's books were among those damaged. Shams took the

books out of the water one by one without any of them being wet or a line from them being erased.

These tales are born from our fantasies. Just as in fairly tales, no cause and effect need to exist, and miracles and the impossible happen all the time, we expect great men of thought and morality to perform unnatural and uncommon deeds. Our magic-loving minds cannot comprehend that self-righteousness, freedom from the bonds of lust, freedom from jealousy, greed and hate, an upward journey towards salvation and finally becoming a true human being are more valuable and more awesome than any extraordinary behavior. For people who are fascinated by magicians, understanding the magnificence of the human soul is very hard.

In the preceding centuries, this kind of weak-minded imagination served as a shield that prevented people from following the righteous invitations of the prophets. It provided them with excuses to not comply with teachings that could serve their own well being.

"We shall not put our belief in you unless you show us that you caused a stream of water to flow or show us a garden filled with dates and grapes, where there are streams of water; or when you can tear open the sky to show us God and the angels; or if you had a house decorated with beautiful ornaments; or if you can ascend to the sky and we will not believe your ascent to the sky unless you send us a letter from there so we can read it. God, tell them, whether I am more than a human being with a mission from you."

(Koran, verse Bani Esrafil, Suras 90, 92 and 93)

The stories about the first encounter between Shams-e

Tabrizi and Jallal ud Din were derived from a great psychological need people have to color contemporary matters with magic. For that reason, and because the revolution in Molana's soul manifested itself as sudden and miraculous incidents, his contemporaries assumed that Molana was a rigid mullah, far from Sufism and mysticism. Otherwise, it would not have seemed as if miracles had taken place.

In their imagination, the story had to be that a religious jurisprudent suddenly turned into a carefree, ambitious Gnostic—that a man far from poetry and literature, in a split second, became one of the greatest literary artists in the Farsi language.

There is no doubt that meeting Shams-e Tabrizi changed Jallal ud Din Mohammad's thinking, affecting his way of life and creating a storm within him. Both the manifested and the concealed indications, however, denote that the matter did not take place in such an unexpected and illogical manner as his miracle-loving followers asserted.

First, there is the obvious and definite evidence of Molana's vast and elaborate knowledge of the Farsi language. His incredible talent, his linguistic power that was the source of more than 70 thousand verses did not originate with meeting Shams-e Tabrizi. Surely he had already been an expert in poetry and literature, familiar with the works of Iranian and Arab literary figures who preceeded him. Second, it is certain that Jallal ud Din Mohammad was never a fanatic, and he was not a man who dealt only with the surface of religious issues or treated men as slaves to obligatory instructions. Rather, in addition to leading an academy for religious teachings and

discussions, he had a khanehghah[6] and a center for people who wanted to learn about religion as well as mysticism. This was a common practice of that time. Many Gnostics, such as Sheik Abu Saiid Abu Al Khair, mixed Gnosticism with religion while never deviating from religious practices. Baha ud Din Walad, Molana's father, was the same type of man. When he was emigrating from Balkh[7] he stayed in Nishapur[8] to be of service to Attar, who had become well-known in mysticism and was recognized as the "Second Sanai." It is recorded that Attar had seen a light in Jallal ud Din's face and had foreseen a bright future for him. The great mystic of Nishapur was not a fortune teller, and it would have been natural for him to talk to Jallal ud Din. Obviously the twelve year old child had impressed and excited Attar with his knowledge and his talent for poetry.

For these reasons, it would be logical that Shams-e Tabrizi had gone to visit a man who was already a great poet in search of illumination. Naturally Molana's fame and talent as a poet and a literary man had not been limited to the small town of Konya; it had spread to many other cities and towns. That is why Shams-e Tabrizi was drawn to visit him.

Jallal ud Din wrote more than 40 thousand verses of ghazals. The fluency and the abundance of mysticism in them prove that his work in mysticism and poetry did not begin with his meeting of Shams. Not all the ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams*

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[6] Khanehghah. A convent where dervishes and their disciples live and practice Sufism.

[7] Balkh. Capital city of Bactria; center of Persian Zoroastrianism. Now Balkh is a small city in Afghanistan.

[8] Nishapur. Birthplace of Khayyam, Attar and many other Iranian scholars. This city was nearly destroyed during the attack of Mongols on Iran.

end in Shams-e Tabrizi's name. Many of these ghazals end in the word "silence," or words that in themselves show that they were written before meeting Shams. If not all of them were written before, many of them were, and for that reason we do not see the rapture and excitement which characterize Molana's poetry as limited to the propagation of Gnosticism within the specific territory of religious law.

The unique music that existed in Molana's soul emphasizes this point. I do not know of a poet whose soul was as stormy, fluctuating, and to this degree susceptible. The universe surrounds him from every direction and his soul was filled with movement and excitement. This is an innate characteristic that cannot be learned. It is possible for a dying talent to be activated by an external stimulus, but no generosity from any saint could bring about something from nothing.

Rather than pointing to any specific metaphor, a careful and patient researcher assiduously studying the *Divan-e Shams* would find the progression of this revolution in Jallal ud Din's soul. There are ghazals in this *Divan* that assist us in this search, as if the great poet himself were holding our hand and were helping us in this quest:

I was dead,
I became alive.
I was tears,
I turned to laughter.
Love's wealth came to me,
I became immortal.
My vision is satisfied now,
my soul is brave.

I have the guts of a lion,
I am the shining Venus.
He said to me, "You are not crazy,
crazy enough to be in chains."
He said, "You are not drunk,
go, you do not belong."
I went and became drunk,
filled myself with joy.
He said, "You have not been slain,
you have not burst with joy."
In front of his life-giving face,
I dropped, I died.
He said, "You are too smart,
too imaginative, too full of doubts."
I became a fool,
a nervous fool,
then came a sudden shock.
I cut my ties from everyone.
He said, "You have become a candle,
you light up every crowd."
I am not a candle,
I am not a crowd.
I became smoke and spread around.
He said, "You are a sheik, you are the brain,
you lead and you conduct."
I am not a sheik,
I am not leading.
I follow your orders, I am your slave.
He said, "You have your own wings and feathers,
I will not give you them."
In burning desire,
in order to get them from him,
I lost my wings, I shed all my feathers.
The new love said to me,

"Do not walk, do not bother yourself.
Out of my generosity,
out of kindness,
I shall come to you."
Ancient love said to me, "do not depart from our side."
I said, "Yes, I will not leave,
I will be, and I remain where I am."
You are the source of light,
I am the shadow under the willow.
My heart was ripped open,
my heart was warmed up with life.
My heart wove a golden silk,
now I resent the old shabby garment.
At dawn the face of life
boasted with joy.
I was a slave and foolish,
now I am the king in charge.
This fierce dirt will be thankful
to the galaxy, the sky, and the stars,
since they have admitted me now,
into their incredible circle;
the order of celestial bodies
will thank the land and the ferries, the king.
It is of his kindness that
I am bright and giving...

(D. S., Gh # 1393)

The human mind dies from rigidity; as soon as it comes to a free and open space, it flutters and becomes alive. The human being, captured in the confinement of obligatory obedience, serves time in a prison of excruciating fear. The prison's door opens up, the fear disappears, and tears turn to laughter. Why?

It is because a window of light and hope opens up? In the dark, imagination and fantasy have become weak and miserable. When a light is turned on, the horrifying phantoms disappear; the light of a generous, giving God appears and the world changes its face. The regulations that have been made for the order of society and the taming of the monster of the instincts, remain confined to their provenance and do not bring tears to the eyes of the righteous.

Like a mother
worried over her child,
we shiver over our belief.
Why should that delicate soul shiver
when he is all belief?

(D. S., Gh # 2370)

From the first day of birth, man falls prey to suggestive ideas. School and society turn these ideas into an impenetrable trap so that no room is left for the mind to move about. Escaping the boundaries of obligations and being freed from the narrow place of illusions and assumptions requires courage and power of understanding and Jallal ud Din boasts that he has a brave soul and a vision that is satisfied. No one knows what went on between Molana and Shams in their first long hours of seclusion:

Hey, you playing gipsy—
who is drunker
you or me?
Next to your drunkenness
my magic is only a fiction.

(D. S., Gh # 2309)

The poet's magical incantation seems to be a mere fiction when performed in front of Shams. In the same ghazal Molana writes:

My heart was ripped open,
my heart was warmed with life.
My heart wove a golden silk,
now I resent the old shabby garment.

(D. S., Gh # 1393)

Perhaps Shams recognized Jallal ud Din's potential in his bright, healthy eyes and pulled the curtains aside. Nothing remained of Molana, the "leading Sheik" who was the "Mecca of his followers" and the "candle" to the assembly of his disciples. Instead, love and only love remained—love of the Absolute Light, love of pure beauty; a love that for another twenty years set his soul afire and brightened the world of mysticism and literature:

I was a devout man of the country.
I owned my own seat.
Destiny changed my life, I fell in love.
I run around you and clap.

(D. S., Gh # 2152)

Throughout his entire collection of tales and stories, and most clearly through the *Divan-e Shams* and the *Mathnavi*, this fact comes to mind: that inside Molana there was an indefinite source of goodness and love. The glory of his soul, his inner

peace, love and humanity and his kind and forgiving attitude towards the sinful, bring him close to the sacred territory of the prophets.

It is from this source that even the philosophical and religious thoughts originate. His rich spirit colors the facts of life with joy and hope. He sees everything as beautiful. The Infinite Being manifests itself through his spirit and he plays a magical melody.

There is not much information available about Malekdad Shams-e Tabrizi, and not many of his works have remained. However, from what we do know, we can picture him as an intellectual, a Gnostic and a man of knowledge. Euri, a professor of the Farsi language at Cambridge, who has collected comprehensive information about Jallal ud Din, has written a compact article titled, "Jallal ud Din and Shams-e Tabrizi." In this article he quotes Shams-e Tabrizi as saying:

"These people have the right not to be accustomed to my words. My words appear to be all for grandeur. The Koran and the words of Mohammad all support need, therefore it has meaning for them. From me, you hear words not in request nor for a need. These are "high" words, so high that you look up to see them and your hats all fall off." (*Shams's Articles.* Original copy is in the British Museum.)

One night Shams was seated in the company of some other literary men. The men were narrating various stories and each of them was pleased with his own style. Each one would bring up a subject and in turn they all discussed its validity. Shams, however, was sitting quietly throughout the discussion,

until they asked his opinion. He said: "Is there no one amongst you who says I have heard this tale from my own heart, that he has heard it directly from God?"

(From Shams's Articles)

His words demonstrate the wide scope of Shams's thought and the magnificence of his spirit. Obviously he was not limited to obligatory actions and beliefs. His thoughts about metaphysics and Gnosticisim were surely indescribable. Without a doubt, as Shams searched for answers, he interacted with many Gnostics and religious teachers. But because of his extraordinary potential, only Jallal ud Din experienced such spiritual revolution.

Maybe this explains the quality of Shams' effect on Jallal ud Din:

> Every particle on earth
> and in space
> attracts its kind
> like amber attracts a straw.
>
> *(The Sixth Book of the Mathnavi)*

Our attraction to a charming book is not usually based on the discovery of unknown materials. Rather it is in the way the book expresses our hidden desires and provides a clear and organized picture of thoughts and images that, in our subconscious mind already exist in an inarticulate form. Shams-e Tabrizi saw a clear picture of Jallal ud Din's spirit and found a complete human in him:

Oh, a fire sparkled in the house of my heart.
It started to smoke.
Smoke reached the sky.
My fire found a wind to fan it up.

(D. S., Gh # 881)

The fire underneath the ashes has been fanned up. The core of a storm has passed over the sea and created a turmoil.

Shams-e Tabrizi is in my heart now.
I will turn both worlds inside out.

(Attributed to Molana)

This dignified and unique feeling, the feeling of worshiping what is grand, this need that propels beautiful spirits towards beauty and light, this desire to capture the true meaning of humanity would have to have been present in Molan's soul to have caused it to cry out merely because it was separated from an old man, an old man devoid of riches and honors. It would have to have been present in Molana's soul to make him send his son and his people to bring Shams back from Damascus:

Go, go my people, go bring him back to me.
Bring my beloved,
bring my runaway friend back to me.
If he promises that he will come later,
it is all a trick, beware,
he is fooling you.
His talent in talking is magic;
he can stop the fire, he can close the air.
With very sweet songs,
in colorful excuses,

bring him home to me.
Oh, bring my idol to me,
bring that beautiful face back to me…

(D. S., Gh # 163)

This "beautiful faced idol" is a sixty-year-old Shams-e Tabrizi, who after arriving at Konya, monopolized Molana's attention. After meeting Shams, Jallal ud Din was mostly alone with him. He did not attend to others; he abandoned all ordinary tasks and turned his back on all superficial and material things.

This angered and disappointed Molana's followers. The news of their feelings reached Shams, and he decided to leave Konya. Molana sent his oldest son and some of friends to bring Shams back from Damascus. After his return, Shams's second stay in Konya did not last long either. After a while, Molana's disciples revolted against Shams. This time Shams disappeared without a trace. Because of this, suspicions grew that some of Molana's followers and his youngest son had killed Shams. Molana's poetry about this sixty-year-old man moved the world:

If my vision, my mind, my wisdom goes,
don't you go.
Being with you is more to me
than all that.
don't you go.
The sun is under the protection of your shadow.
If the galaxy, the shinning sun, and the glittering stars
depart,
don't you go.
People of belief live in fear of their last breath.
My only fear is of your departure,

don't you go.
With you, every piece of the world
is a beautiful garden.
In the fall, all glory goes from the garden,
don't you go.
Do not leave me in your absence,
your absence is so cruel.
You turned mere stones to precious jewels,
don't you go.
You are the shinning sun.
Next to your burning light, who remains to ask you,
don't you go.
You are the king yourself.
Who is to tell the king,
don't you go.
You are the water of life
the universe is a fish.
Be kind, be giving, have mercy,
don't you go.
The diary in my heart is as long as eternity.
From top to bottom it is written,
don't you go.
Shams-e Tabrizi, you are the water of life.
Don't leave me my source of life,
don't you go.

(D. S., Gh # 2215)

This is the language of poetry, and in Molana's soul there is an endless source of rapture and passion. When this language comes to express itself, music plays. This language is not the language of a disciple addressed to a saint. It is the language of love: a lover is in desperate need of the beloved.

Since we live in a different time, we cannot possibly

understand the meaning of so much passion, or Molana's attraction toward an unknown wonderer. But Molana himself constantly and in different ways has pointed out his condition in a way that leaves no doubt about his transformation by Shams:

I saw myself as a thorn,
I ran to a flower.
I saw myself as bitter,
I hung on to sugar.
I was a bowl filled with poison,
I held on to Jesus.
I was a goblet of wine,
I purified myself.
I was like a painful eye,
I put myself in collyrium.
I found myself to be raw,
I hung to a ripe one.
Love tells me, "You are right,
but don't see it as your own will.
I am like the wind,
you are the fire—
I blew you all up."

(D. S., Gh # 1586)

Yes, this is true. There must have been fire there to be fanned by the wind. For when the wind blows on ashes and dust, it only blows ashes and dust.

This language is the language of love and passion, and the music in Molana's soul that pours out in his poems has caused common people to have dark and contaminated ideas about them. Obviously their congested minds did not permit them to hear the sound of a soul in rapture. Worms that wiggle

in slime see the world as black mud. Their field of vision does not go beyond their surroundings.

This kind of false thinking reminds me of a rich passage from a book by Anatole France, *The Crime of Silvester Bunner,* in which he portrays a cat and its ways of thinking. In the story, a cat is lying down in a library and is astonished by his owner's ignorance as he reads and studies instead of eating and sleeping. Similarly, in another book by the same author titled *Richard's Thoughts,* the images a dog might have about his owner are described in a magnificent way, and the author sees things through the eyes of an animal.

People usually see others out of the corner of their own eyes. Aflakee who constantly attributed miracles to Molana and claimed that Molana was able to read minds, quoted a tale from Shams ud Din Malati :

> "One day, along with Molana, we went to visit Husam in his garden. Molana had put his feet in the water and was telling us stories. In the midst of his talking he pointed out some of Shams-e Tabrizi's virtues and praised him endlessly. One of the disciples, Badr Ud Din Walad Modaress, sighed and lamented that he had missed Shams-e Tabrizi's presence. Molana was quiet for a while and then said, 'Even if you have not met Shams, I swear on my father's grave that you have been in the presence of someone who has a hundred-thousand Shamses in each strand of his hair that are hung in wonder over the secret of his being...'"

Tales of this nature are the very opposite of the image we have of Molana in our mind. Selfishness is a complex human attribute and it usually appears in people who have not had

adequate attention and believe that others consider them to be worthless, so they need to talk and think about themselves. Molana, however, both due to his knowledge of Islam and also because he was very much respected and appreciated by others who treated him as a saint, could not possibly have had this kind of personality. His knowledge, his freedom, his indifference to material things, his good nature and his kindness even to opponents kept him free from such psychological shortcomings. To emphasize this idea, here is another tale from Aflakee that suggests a conclusion opposite from the first one. He quotes Molana's son, Sultan Walad :

"One day in attendance of my father, we went to visit Husam Ud Din in his garden. My friends had put me on a horse and I was following my father slowly. I saw him, my magnificent father, as a sea of excellence who was walking in mud like other men of this earth. At that moment, it crossed my mind that I could cut to pieces whoever opposed such a king and I would throw the pieces to the dogs. My father said, 'Baha Ud Din, this thought which makes you wander is because you are riding on a horse and everyone else is walking. Your elevation is giving you the permission to attack others. Don't mind the unbelievers, the proud, and the believers.' I then came down from the horse and threw myself at his feet and asked for forgiveness. He said: 'I do not approve that you ridicule people. Everyone is a captive of his faith and of God's will. There is hope that their weakness will disappear and that they may become what you wish them to be.'"

This is the true face of Jallal ud Din Mohammad. This man, who forgave those opposed to him, could not possibly degrade Shams who he praised limitlessly.

Molana may have exhorted his followers, or those who were deprived of Shams's presence, to be aware and present to appreciate what exists; to never regret the past, since it is man's habit to focus on what is absent and out of reach and ignore present reality. It was because of these flaws that when Shams-e Tabrizi was among them they did not appreciate him and were jealous of him and took their vengeance so far that Shams had to leave Konya. That is why they did not pay attention to the precious treasure forming inside Molana's soul. The only one who had recognized Shams and was his mirror was Jallal ud Din.

The accounts about Molana and Shams demonstrate that none of the narrators have been able to portray the true face of these great men. Their tales are contaminated with their own delusions and the image they portray is a reflection of their own minds and dreams. In Molana's words:

> No matter if the east and west are illuminated,
> only according to the size of the windows
> does a house get its share
> of moonlight.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 939)

Another story from Aflakee, that is free from interpretation and only reports an event that took place, shows us how carefree and pure Jallal ud Din was and how he preferred to be in the company of his friends, conversing with them rather than being involved with any other worldly matter:

"One day His Highness Molana was conversing with a group

of friends in a hall. One of the friends was playing the harp and discoursing about that instrument. At that time the Sheik of Sheiks, Sharaf ud Din Movaselli and some other dignitaries arrived. Khajeh Majd ud Din, who was a disciple of Molana, honored their arrival with excessive lavishness and naively asked the player to put away his harp, since the dignitaries were there. Sharaf ud Din gave two thousand derhams to Khajeh Majd ud Din to buy Bahaii shoes for the friends. He took that money to Molana. Molana told him forcefully: 'None is immortal, not you, not the money, nor those cold men. You received them with such luxury that I assumed the Holy Prophet or Gabriel had arrived. We will continue with whatever we were doing. Whoever comes and whoever goes—calm down!'"

A healthy mind can easily throw away the exaggerated image and dig out the truth from the stories that have been told about Jallal ud Din Mohammad. The truth is that the shining and distinguished character of Jallal ud Din Mohammad has come close to the domain of Christ as a guardian and a great spiritual man.

It is as if in this great man there were an ever-flowing stream of love and goodness, a ray of light from within, that always brightened his surroundings. With the help of God he became all goodness, kindness, love, enthusiasm and sacrifice.

Jallal ud Din is among that rare and excellent company of people who have no corner of darkness in their spirit. No trace of hatred, jealousy, envy, unfairness or fear exists in their pure soul. They are pure goodness, and nothing else besides goodness and beauty reflects in their soul. The reason for the respect and acceptance these people receive in their lives should be searched from within these virtues. They constantly shine the

light of love, kindness and sacrifice on their fellow humans.

The fireplace of rapture was always warm inside Molana's heart. This pure and heavenly flame was fanned whenever he found purity, kindness, understanding and perfection. Molana saw this humanity and purity in Shams-e Tabrizi; it was under the influence of these feelings that when he lost Shams-e Tabrizi, a common and simple goldsmith, Salah ud Din Zarkub, became the object of his love. When Zarkub died, Molana mourned:

Hidden like a soul, you go
from the heart of my life.
You are the elegant cypress,
you are the splendor of the garden.
I want to tear the seven skies,
pass all the seven stars,
with the hope that you'll look at me with kindness,
or see my wandering soul.
When you came upon me,
belief and blasphemy served me.
Watching you was my religion;
your face, my belief.
I lost my heart for you,
I lost sleep over you.
Come up to Jacob,
you are my Joseph of Canaan.
With your kindness,
I turn to spirit,
I pass my conciousness.
Your being is hiding
inside my hidden soul.
Flowers blossom in your presence,

the eyes of the narcissus are drunk for you.
The trees are fruitful for you,
you are my endless view.
You are the soul before any other—
a place before any existence.
You are "it", before that of anyone.
You are mine, you are mine,
my king Salah ud Din,
my leader, my guide.
You are free from my condescension,
you are higher than my possibilities.
If the ocean were an infinite grave
for the passengers of this ship,
there is no death in the water of life
for me with you.
You are the jewel of the Persian Sea.
If you go,
don't go without me.
You are my soul,
don't leave my body,
don't leave my vision,
you are the light of my eyes.

(D. S., Gh # 1805)

After Salah ud Din Zarkub's death, Husam ud Din Chelebi became his companion. Husam ud Din was one of Molana's wise friends who believed in him. Perhaps by reading the following ghazal ordinary people may get the wrong idea. They might think of Chelebi as a handsome young man and think of Molana's attraction to him as the kind of attraction Mahmud had

for Ayaaz:[9]

Oh Chelebi, it is all you,
your lips, your eyes
are breaking my heart.
You are busy in some other place,
you are a fire in my chest.
Oh how much fun and how naughty you are!
Oh Chelebi, it is all you.
You fooled me one more time.
You left me one more time.
My heart starts to bleed,
Oh Chelebi, it is all you.

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

This Husam ud Din Chelebi, who was Molana's successor at his school and was called the "Second Jonaid"[10] after Molana's death, was the man who insisted that Jallal ud Din write the *Mathnavi.* His name is known to this day due to the glorifying poems about him in that great collection of poems:

Once Zia ul Hagh, Husam ud Din
returned from the peak of the skies.
He had gone to explore its reality.
Without him the blossoms did not mature.
Once he came back from the sea
the harp of the Mathnavi started playing.

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

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[9] Mahmud and Ayaaz. Abul Najm Ayaaz was a Turkish servant in the Ghazna courts. He was very much favored by Sultan Mahmud. Ayaaz was known for his bravery, his intelligence and his incredible looks.

[10] Second Jonaid. Second teacher.

It is for you, Zia ul Hagh Husam ud Din,
That the Mathnavi is brighter than the moon.
You have the leash in your hands.
Pull the Mathnavi where you demand.
You are the force behind the Mathnavi,
if it increases, it is your decision.

(The Fourth Book of the Mathnavi)

King Husam ud Din, the light of the stars,
has requested the work to go on.
He has ordered the fifth book of the Mathnavi.
You, Zia ol Hagh Husam ud Din the brave—
you are the boss,
the owner of this delight.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

Oh, the life of my heart, Husam ud Din,
my wishes move for the sixth book.
The rapture of your genius
created these pages:
six books in six dimensions.
"So the lover will circumambulate the place—
no lover has ever walked around it before."
Love is not satisfied with five or six—
the purpose is to fill the heart of a beloved.

(The Sixth Book of the Mathnavi)

When the first book of the *Mathnavi* was completed, Husam's wife died. He was very depressed and did not come to visit Molana as often. That is the main reason the composition of the *Mathnavi* was on hold for a while. Most probably, if Husam had not returned with excitement and determination, Jallal ud Din would not have continued it:

Until the clouds cry,
grass will not laugh.
Unless the infant cries,
it will not drink his mother's milk;
Not till the little poor candy boy's tears come down,
will the pot of generosity come to boil.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

These detailed observations and the unique connections and attractions that exist only among holy spirits are incomprehensible to people who, as Molana writes in the Mathnavi, have seen the "life of the lions and the dogs" and do not know that "what unites the souls of the lions is God." Such is the beauty of the soul of Jallal ud Din Mohammad. His spiritual passion shows up as love, and the language he expresses this love with is poetry: ghazals filled with music, passion, and rapture.

If Molana speaks with Shams-e Tabrizi, Salah ud Din Zarkub, or Husam ud Din Chelebi in this warm and passionate way, it is because he sees a ray of the Absolute Being in them. Molana who is exploring, sees "Him" in everything, and immaculate beings are a manifestation of "His" light:

Whosoever intoxicates my senses,
whosoever takes my will from my soul and heart—
whosoever brings my spirit
to scream by dawn;
whosoever took us off the path
with his sorrow,
where can He be found?

He is the soul of souls,
no wonder He cannot be traced.
Whosoever is after a room in my heart,
where can He be found ?
He closed the bright curtain of my mind
and left me to imagine.
Whosoever is hidden and can secretly cover my heart-
where can he be found?
Only when the mind was drunk
did "why" and "how" cease to exist.
Whosoever was drunk
had no "why" and "how"—
where can He be found?

(D. S., Gh # 412)

It is difficult for ordinary people, distracted by day to day matters, to understand this level of spirituality. These poor souls cannot possibly perceive such endless and incredible love. All that passion for something intangible and untouchable. How did Molana himself perceive all this? Or we might better ask, how did he feel it? Was he semiconscious and experienced it with his unconscious mind?

When intoxicated, a person can feel even if he does not perceive things. Maybe he feels more deeply and strongly. Jallal ud Din in his rapture is like this. A kind of immediate effect and enlightenment takes place, not with the mind, but rather with an unknown feeling:

You might have the pearl,
but I dare you.
I am so far from the sea,
yet I've got the real jewel.

(D. S., Gh # 2924)

I cannot verbalize what I feel when I read the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi.* There are usually no specific or definite feelings. They are the shadows of images flickering in and out of Jallal ud Din's mind. Perhaps his own poem with its vagueness, can explain this:

A box of jewels was bestowed.
The roar of the sea arrived.
The sun of happiness rose,
or rather, the ray of God.
What is an image?
Who is the king?
What is wisdom?
These veils cover your vision.
Throw them all away.
The source of all the pleasures
is in your own eyes, inside.
Look inside your own head.
But beware,
for you have two heads.
One head is earthly,
one holy from the sky.
So many pure heads,
fallen off on the ground,
so you can understand:
it is the other head keeping you up.
The prime head is hidden,
only the secondary shows.
Know that beyond this world
there is the infinite world.
Close your barrel,

take the wine from ours:
the jar of perception
is tighter than a defile.

(D. S., Gh # 464)

Losing myself, when lost
is my faith.
Non-existence in my being, is my law.
I walk on my feet to His home.
The wild horse, this world,
is under my saddle.
I have gone a hundred worlds' distance,
in only the space of a moment.
I look back and discover,
that's only been my first step.
Why should I wander around the world,
when my love is inside my soul?

(D. S., Gh # 430)

Oh my heart, my eyes, my delight,
you play a new tune in my heart.
You are the music behind it.
With every breath you play a different tune.
Play it so that with each stroke,
the dark covers are torn from my eyes.
Not me, not you,
it is both—you,
or you are me.
You are my soul,
you are of me,
or you are me.

(D. S., Gh # 3301)

You are a parrot,
a baby parrot.
You take the sugar
with such coquetry.
From the eternal land of sweets,
you have come and you are going.
Your joy is auspicious,
especially when you are laughing.
I will start this festivity
since you are beginnings.
You are the infinite joy,
the only field of sugar.
Joy inside joy,
sugar mixed with sugar.
You are the cupbearer
of this tavern;
you are the ecstasy,
you make everyone drunk.
Then you tear off their masks.
I am drunk, really drunk,
yet in some way conscious.
You, who are aware of me completely,
take my consciousness away all the way.
Since I turned my head away,
I found a new wisdom.
You are the wisdom of this world,
and the hidden wisdom too.
I turned to a monk
in the sanctuary of horizons;
I cut from every other
so you won't cut from me.
I have the thought of you in my mind,
I have closed my eyes to me.

How can eyes see something else
when you are looking at me?

(D. S., Gh # 2462)

In your bazaar
a hundred gowns,
go for only one girdle.
With a face like yours in this world,
heads are turned towards the wall.
Each particle of your sun
is calling out, "I am God."
On every corner there is a "Mansoor" hung,
in taverns drunks have fallen on the ground.
On the side of the flowers,
a thorn on each knot,
every branch is begging,
"Hold me, I am drunk!"
On the side of the wise men,
every wise man is saying,
"I am dazzled, take me."
One group is drunk with wisdom,
another with no wisdom.
Beside the drunk and the dazzled,
there is another bunch.
We are the sizzling wine,
the wine from the tavern;
but the barrel
is thatched by clay and straw.
The plaster moved to the dancing,
to the tune from the sizzling.
Is there a more joyous chore,
anywhere in this world?

(D. S., Gh # 2599)

The brilliance of the sky
is in your vault of the heavens.
The bloody goblet of sunrise,
is your bleeding spear.
Desires upon desires,
floods within floods,
dancing and rolling
to reach the shores of your sea.
To see your immensity,
the moon looks up in awe.
Every morning draught
the nightingales, like lovers,
singing in harmony,
celebrating your glory.
You don't allow me time
you give delight after delight.
Now I have lost my head,
I cannot describe that ecstasy.
Who am I in a place
where this fantastic sky
has no moment to rest,
to satisfy its thirst?
When love came next to my heart,
it grew weary of what my heart said.
I want my heart to be quiet.
My heart says, "I am his flute, my moan is His breath."
To that I say, "Now you may moan.
I give my life to your sigh,
my soul and my body
to His service."

(D. S., Gh # 2135)

My life depends on his smile,

my heart and mind are dazzled by Him.
What does my body want?
His intoxicating wine.
What does my mind ask of me?
His everlasting leadership.
The image of His face
will never leave my heart,
for there will never be a mate similar to Him.
The kingdom of this world
is not where His pride is.
The pride is ours
to have an owner like Him.
Lucky for the heart who has His pain within.
Lucky is the village who pays tribute to Him.
To Him, what is this universe
but one of his old tents.
Who are Rostam and Hamzeh[11]
His devoted martyrs.
If He visits a dead man
the dead man comes to life.
If He touches a dervish
his rags begin to glow.

(D. S., Gh # 2141)

Rostam, Hamzeh, old tent, tribute: these metaphors show that the writer despairs of finding words to express his fervor. These are not the words of a literary poet who searches his mind to find the right term to describe God's greatness. They do not have the eloquence of Saadi's, the maturity of Onsoree's, or the magnificence of Anvari's and Farukhy's words.

We do not see the solidity of Masud-e Saed of Salmaan,

[11] Hamzeh. Prophet Mohammad's uncle.

neither do we find Khaghani's skillfull combinations. Yet there is something that replaces and surpasses all: Molana expresses his feelings, simply and free from care; they pour out as fire from his passionate soul. In that condition he resembles a tornado that spins everything in its path. It attracts lovers and the spiritual alike. There is no reason, no questioning; he lives in a dream world where logic has no influence. He just loves.

This way of talking—this burning fire, this insane struggle to express feelings, with no hesitation to use any kind of allegory—brings to mind a tale Molana narrated in his second book of the *Mathnavi* about Moses and a shepherd. The shepherd is conversing with God in very simple language:

> Where are you my God? So I can sacrifice my goats.
> Where are you my God? I have my regrets and my sighs.
> Where are you my God? So I can repair your peasant
> shoes.
> Where are you my God? So I can brush your hair...
>
> *(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)*

When Moses hears this and finds out that the shepherd is addressing the Almighty, he becomes outraged and says:

> What profanity, what oppression is this?
> Stuff cotton in your mouth,
> say no more.
> The stink of your infidelity
> is stinking up the world.
> This blasphemy is turning
> the silk robe of faith
> to an old rag.
> Talk of the peasant shoes and feet

applies more to a man like you.
It doesn't suit a power,
like the power of God...

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

But then God castigates Moses, "Why did you hurt the naive man? Everyone talks according to the level of their thinking. What is beautiful and acceptable in our presence is his honesty."

God then put in Moses' head,
secrets that simply cannot be spoken.
When Moses heard the castigation from God,
he ran after the shepherd in the desert,
eventually found him, and said:
"I have good news, O shepherd.
I have received orders from God.
Do not look for rules or other ways to talk
continue speaking however you want..."
The shepherd replied, "Moses,
I am past all that,
my heart is now smeared in blood.
I have passed the tree
in the seventh firmament.
I have gone thousands of years..."

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

VII

Illumination in Place of Reason

I am as a lute, played by his kindness—
don't assume my crying out
is the music of complaint.
It is not up to me
to change the melody.
His will plays music
on every vein in my body.

(D. S., Gh # 2248)

My heart-capturing idol
ever since you took over my soul,
the light in my heart
leaps through my tongue.

(D. S., Gh # 1830)

You inspire me
to create poetry.
For fear of disobedience,
I will not be silent.
I continue reciting.

(D. S., Gh # 1375)

A leap out of my heart—
another tongue that talks,
so that you don't assume
we can only speak with one mouth.
The wise teacher left the classroom.
We crazy children
are throwing at each other—
pieces of chalk!

(D. S., Gh # 3445)

In the language of Jallal ud Din Mohammad there exists a wave, a current that sweeps you off your feet and takes you along. Struggling with its power is useless. You must go along; you must fall to the same depth that he has fallen, down into the sea of light, into the mysterious burning hole that incinerates all disappointment.

Just as the crying or laughter of a crowd affects us even if we do not know the reason for the crowd's emotion, the fire that comes out of Molana's soul warms us though we are ignorant of its source.

The security and warmth that comes from Molana's language cannot be found in any of the holy books. This warmth penetrates into every corner of our soul.

Besides him, I have nothing else to do.
He is my work, he is my workshop too.
I brag and brag and brag,

because he is purchasing me.
I will fly to the sky
since he is my feathers and my wings.
I will reach to the heavens,
because he is my head and my turban.
Like a garden of flowers,
I color—
he has given me all the paints.
Like the life-giving sun,
he showers me with precious thorns of light.
Why has the house of my body
become the Mecca of the masses?
Because night and day
he is all over my body.
He says, "Stop now—how much you brag and brag!"
What can I do? I am helpless,
my "too little" and my "too much" are of him too.

(D. S., Gh # 465)

Go past the fourth and the fifth,
do not look into the sixth or the seventh.
When you take off from this earth,
you will see the seventh sky.
When you have seen the seventh sky,
continue on to the eighth.
Step into that place too
until you see the land of eternity.

(D. S., Gh # 3271)

You were tied up like clot,
and then you turned to blood.
Then you became smoother,

till you learned to rhyme.
O Being,
come to me,
I will make you flow.

(D. S., Gh # 1374)

You, like the rose, that passes from hand to hand;
You, like wine, intoxicating humanity.
Drunk! Drunk!
You are closer to me than my own breath.
I won't speak in your presence, except
Silently! Silently!
Your honor said, "Leave!"
There is no entry.
Your benevolence said, "Stay!"
There is! There is!

(D. S., Gh # 511)

Molana does not exert his talent to utter verses about the virtues of the Almighty. He does not consider any kind of eulogizing worthy of *his* essence:

To pray to Him is to sin,
for the claim of existence
is false
there, where the Absolute Being
exists.

(The Second Book of the Mathnavi)

We are not dealing with a jeweler who patiently arranges small gems together to make a beautiful ornament. He who speaks from within Jallal ud Din does not have to worry if the

right words match or rhyme, or whether they form sophisticated sentences. He himself is dealing with a stubborn child within, who wants something, and wants only that thing and nothing else. No other toy fools him, nor will he change his mind:

I have tested every human, and decided to be with you.
I have dived into every sea:
You are the jewel I found.
I have opened every barrel,
I have tasted a thousand wines:
only the taste of your spirit
possesses my mind.
I ignored all I ever aimed for:
watch them now—they all follow me.
I served You in Your kingdom for just a few days:
there is not one king in this world
that is not my servant now.
Leave me my desperate body,
leave me my sorrowful heart—
Go!
My true heart will not appear
as long as the two of you hang on to me.

(D. S., Gh # 770)

Besides your loving, on this earth,
nothing else exists.
I know, for I have searched.
Besides the reminiscence of you
no one suits my companionship.
I know for I have searched.
No, none, on this earth, not a face like yours,
your beauty,

your carefree being.
I might have to search the skies,
all the way up to the seventh sky.
Better yet, I'll dissolve in your love.
Nothing better to do in both worlds,
than to search for the ultimate Divine.
We have the ring,
now we can't find the gem.
Since the face in His gem
can never be found—
not in Roman, not in Chinese idols.
I know, for I have searched.

(D. S., Gh # 426)

With his love,
every strand of hair on my body,
just where it meets my skin,
becomes a source of life-
becomes a drop of precious water,
becomes a shinning pearl.

(D. S., Gh # 545)

Molana has a fever, a fever that is burning him all over. In his condition, there is no inner tranquility to enable him to reason or to question. When someone is in pain, he usually does not have the patience to mind the technique of his language—shallow words or broken sentences might express his feelings just as well as correct usage:

One or two-hundred kings
rule and do battle in my heart.
Whose territory is this

chaotic land of the heart?
So vast a space is my heart,
that the world is lost in its amplitude.
Why is this chest so dry?
Wisdom goes from door to door;
the soul is running on the streets,
the heart searching all over the place!
My God, who are they looking for?
I met with the king once,
the wise and the judicious king.
I asked him who he was,
this king of kings.
As he heard me speak,
he called his men forth.
"Where is this smoke coming from?
Who is this desperate man?"

(D. S., Gh # 467)

Molana's language in praising God is not the language of a literary poet. In his words we do not observe artificiality, obligatory diction, or resorting to literary techniques. His praise is not in the form of a eulogy; it is not the language of a slave beseeching his master; it is the language of love, the language of joy and enthusiasm. It is not the language between creation and creator either; it is the language of shadow and silhouette. It is difficult to express the meaning of Jallal ud Din's spiritual poems, and if in some chapters too many of his poems are presented, it is because the sound of his soul can be heard better that way:

Who is "He"?

Who is "He"?
He who gives you so much passion,
He who turns your bitterness to joy,
He who transforms a monster to an angel,
who turns mornings to a feast,
He who grants vision and wisdom
to a man who is born blind,
who brightens up the dark,
who softens the thorns and turns them to flowers?
He who gives light to the stars;
He who solves the unsolvable;
He who gives mercy to all servants
and admires His own creation too;
He who lets sins fall away,
like the autumn leaves,
who whispers excuses
in the unbelievers' ears,
tells him to say, "O owner of loyalty, forgive me,
for the sin I have committed"; and when he starts praying
in hiding He whispers, "Amen."
It is love that in good and evil
puts power in our arms and legs.
It is love that matches this weak body
with the body of Gods.

(D. S., Gh # 528)

Is there a soul who
does not obey your will?
Is there anyone who's not
enraptured by your beauty?
The jewel on every lip
comes from the wine you give.
All the magnificent ones

are begging at your door.
Every soul is connected to your virtues.
No vein is opened or closed except because of you.
Whose eyes have ever seen
a flower dance
but in joy for you?

(D. S., Gh # 507)

Drawn into the stream of his bounty,
I worship the sunrise.
The perfume from the flowers
pulls me toward the meadow.
People in the stream don't tolerate
the weight of their clothes.
Imagine the loss I suffer,
carrying my turban and robe along.
The vintner cupbearer
takes me away, brings me back to the Being,
takes away my heart,
takes my mind away too,
gives me wine,
and makes me drunk.

(D. S., Gh # 39)

Molana does not resign himself to reasoning as other literary men do. In the domain of natural science and mathematics, intellect can play an essential role; however, the world of metaphysics is out of reach. In that world intellectual reasoning can be tampered with. In the supernatural world, against each hypothesis there can be a counter hypothesis. In divine matters, for each point of intellectual reasoning, the human mind can easily find a weak point or an opposing view.

Molana, as a prominent teacher of the science of mind and the expression of the thought of his time, has found a way out of all that:

I am not asking for wisdom.
Enough of knowledge.
Enough of searching.
The candle of his face brightens my nights.

(D. S., Gh # 2062)

Make your way to the inner world,
away from the provident mind.

(D. S., Gh # 925)

O child,
wisdom is an obstacle
for the explorer on the path.
Break all chains,
O child.
Wisdom, a tie;
heart, a cheat;
soul, a cover.
The road is hidden from all three,
O child.
When risen above all three—
wisdom, soul, and heart—
this certainty is only an illusion,
O child.

(D. S., Gh # 1097)

Whosoever does not see your face

makes wisdom the target of his prayer.
For a blind man who does not see,
no doubt, a cane
works better than a lantern.

(D. S., Gh # 1087)

I called on my mind,
my mind responded,
"I have turned to wine."
Burn your soul to ashes—
burn it to collyrium—
anoint the eyes
so that there's nobody blind
in either world.

(D. S., Gh # 2924)

How could a man lost in the darkness of a desert on a starless night use logic to find his way, unless there are either flashes of lightning, the stars appear in the sky, or dawn smiles on him? Such is the circumstance for Jallal ud Din. He finds himself in that darkness, then a ray of light shines upon him. A light tears through the density of darkness; a glitter on Mount Sinai draws him towards itself:

I was like Moses going to Mount Sinai
in rapture, in fire, with zeal.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

(D. S., Gh # 131)

In finding this direction, Molana has followed an unknown feeling—different from our ordinary senses. He

describes these senses much like a person who talks in his sleep or who is talking to himself. These whispers become poetry. When we read them, we see the glitter on the mountain and we too are drawn to it. We do not know where we are going, but the magnet pulls us. It is as if we too are being affected by an inner urge, our innate perception. We prefer that to stopping and being disappointed. In love, there is no third option. What has always reinforced spiritual leaders is this human quality: their avoidance of disappointment and their resentment of doubt.

Sometimes exploring the *Divan-e Shams* resembles a religious prayer—not any ordinary prayer where there is no real attention paid to the supernatural and certain words and rituals are repeated without faith. No, we are speaking of the kind of prayer where a person is separated from self, his poor and weak Self, and his spirit become aloof and distant from insistent everyday concerns and are drawn closer to the eternal soul. We are speaking of a kind of prayer where Self is removed from all evil and wickedness and goes toward purity and refinement; a prayer that saves us from contempt and as a result, the human being becomes the human being that, as Jallal ud Din puts it, is "higher than the angels…that which is indescribable." As the Koran says, "Daily prayer will cleanse the human being from all evil and all that is not pure." This condition is a condition of seizing and releasing all worldly attachments. This feeling of the ascension of thought and spirit happens many times as we read the *Divan-e Shams.* In my own youth, I committed myself to various prayers. I even stayed up some nights praying or woke up at dawn to perform them. However, I do not recall having felt

the same freedom, the same closeness to spirituality that I did while reading the *Divan-e Shams.*

This feeling, this quality found in the *Divan-e Shams,* is only experienced in thinking and deliberating, when one lies and stares at the sky and one's unlimited and illogical imagination wants to estimate the vastness and greatness of the universe but is unable; when one wants to find the secret of the universe but cannot. Eventually, one gets confused, helpless and hopeless because of this lack of understanding. As a result one feels how inconsequential he and society are, the uselessness of man's thoughts and dreams, and the insignificance of this planet. It is as if one loses one's sanity—with this difference: the waves of Molana's spirit try to wash away the poison of materialistic thinking from the mind and with the help of allegories, interpretations, and approximations, are able to give us warmth and hope.

In this work, Molana neither reasons with you nor invites you to accept his thoughts. He has no new reasoning that is unknown to others. Reasons are both prone to distortion and argument. But Molana is not advertising any product, any idea. If there is a mission or teaching, it is found in the *Mathnavi.* In the *Divan-e Shams* his spirit is vast, he expresses what he feels; what he says is for himself. He even confesses to that:

> Like a harp, unaware
> of the music played upon it;
> like a pen between the fingers of love;
> selfless, forced to move about
> on rolls and rolls of paper,

unaware of what I write—
at this moment I cannot tell,
the difference between night and day;
between the sound of beads of water bubbling
and the rhymes of my verse,
so stunned and drunk am I from what I have seen.
It releases me from the light of paradise
just as much as from the fires of hell.
On this upward spiritual flight,
I have flown past blasphemy,
I have gone past Islam,
I have left my gowns,
I know of no girdle of Zonnar.[1]

(D. S., Gh # 1487)

A harp has no will of its own. It is the captive of the player's fingers. The roar that comes out of its silent strings is the uproar of the player's soul. The flute has joined his companion, to say something of what has not yet been spoken. In this condition "light" and "fire" are the same for Molana. It is in this upward spiral that he has followed farther than more limited minds, farther than Islam, farther than the infidels or any other socially conditioned group:

Up there, there is no room—
no room for religion,
no room for profanity,
no mention of us,
of me,

[1] Zonnar. A girdle which the Christians of the Levant were obliged to wear in order to distinguish them from the Moslems.

or any kind of faith or belief.

(D. S., Gh # 685)

Pour me some wine,
pour me enough
to release me of myself.
For in being and in me
I've seen nothing
but pain and fatigue.

(D. S., Gh # 1690)

Open your eyes!
Open both eyes!
Look for an answer—
look for it inside.
Find the stream of water,
of wine,
of milk and honey.
Look for it all inside.
Do not be the derision of others,
some telling you that
and some telling you this.
How I adore the wise flowers,
careless of what people say—
if they name them flowers
or call them thorns.
Open your own eyes from now on—
don't follow the sight of others.
If you don't,
some name you an infidel,
others call you a devout.

(D. S., Gh # 1972)

This is how Molana feels. He senses things, and then uncontrollably they are projected from him and they affect you—you, who feel, you whose nerves are like taut strings, ready to make music, you who are not a prisoner of basic human instincts.

There are whispers within Molana; it is these that put our wild and exhausted souls in a cradle, rock them and give them hope. On a quiet starry night, the sound of a flute echoes, and the shadows of images fall. We fall into the darkness of a heavy and enjoyable sleep. We come close to the eternal spirit of the universe; we forget the contempt and the indigence of life and are freed from fears and worries.

Listen, listen to these whispers. They show the reality of Molana's feelings far better than my inadequate tongue:

> Lovers, O lovers,
> whosoever sees His face
> will lose his sanity,
> his temper,
> will only search for the Beloved,
> his business will be ruined,
> he will only run after Him
> with head and with face,
> tumbling like water in a running stream.
> My legs and my arms are exhausted,
> I have come to the end of my search,
> my search is a dead body,
> next to His vital reach.
> Loving Him is capable
> of taking your aching heart,
> holding it in the palms of His hands

like a perfumed fruit,
and enjoying its aroma.
You lucky heart!
In His love,
sanity is lost forever,
bewildered like the vault of heaven,
when all weak and run-down,
how hard it is to find a cure.
Behold, lovers O lovers,
kings beg at His doorstep,
beauties scavenge His ground;
lion, tails down, touching the ground,
bowing to the dogs of His neighborhood.
Yes, look up at the sky,
do you see his castle—
the lights, the torches on his ramparts?
He is faceless himself
yet He is the artist painting the whole scene.
My heart, don't be satisfied!
Search, search until you find out.

(D. S., Gh # 2130)

In water and in mud
I am awaiting my turn,
waiting in fear, and hope.
I have waited a few days
for a call to proclaim me.
He said, "You are not in water and mud,
your shadow is on this side—
my soul-stealing industry
has taken you out of this world."
My mind exploded
when I heard what my beloved said.

The rest of the story is a mystery—
no wise man will ever find out.

(D. S., Gh # 1824)

You are the wine,
we are the hangover antidote.
You are the water,
we are the stream.
No location for you, no destiny,
you come in our direction entirely.
What did you put in the wine
to give it potency?
What did you put in the honey
to make it taste so sweet?
What power did you give the mind
to make it so ambitious, so proud?
What did you whisper in the flowers' ears
To blossom in laughter?
What did you put in the reed
to fill it up with sweetness?

(D. S., Gh # 2853)

Come on in,
joy's incomplete without you.
Is there anyone
who is not your servant from the heart?
You are to our soul,
as soul is to the body,
hiding from sight,
but not hidden at all.
Wherever we reach,
what we touch is life;

but touching the soul's
not an easy thing to do.
This life sifted through this mold,
has now become a mirror
reflecting the Beloved's soul.
The sun and the mirror
are getting together now.
This is no time for disturbing tales,
I am going to get drunk.
I do worry,
what if there is no time
to elaborate on all this?
Put your fingers on my mouth,
do not allow me to speak.

(D. S., Gh # 502)

Come closer,
your face is all light.
No one is exempt from receiving your delight.
What covers the mind
is only a thought.
You don't need to think—
the truth is all about.
With your beauty all around us
there will be no excuses left
for whoever suffers
from this moment on.

(D. S., Gh # 505)

As we read the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* we come across some ghazals that seem to have been written in a time of revelation and exultation. It is if Jallal ud Din has seen

something, something that has illuminated his soul. This assumption is not implausible, considering that he was a man who had always been engaged with the inner world:

> There is music, there is dancing, whirling in my soul.
> I hear the harp, the daaf,
> and the songs coming from
> within.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2852)

> I escape to find refuge inside,
> I find myself in prison.
> I break the chains from my feet,
> only to see them tied up again.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 1963)

Some people depend on sedatives and other substances to escape from the realities of the world they are in. Though these substances create a different world for them where illusions and shadows replace reality, some kind of ecstasy and an unawareness of life takes over.

For other people, people with mental illnesses, this condition (a separation from reality and living in a world their minds have created) comes inevitably. The mentally unbalanced person has no grasp of the order of events. His overly sensitive and stimulated nervous system deals with the world from a particular angle that is in no way in conformity with current reality. He judges matters by his ill mind. In this domain his mind resembles a concave-convex mirror that does not reflect

objects the way they actually are.

Some of the Sufis and the holy men whose view of the world is drawn from their inner canon experience this separation from reality. But these men are released from the reality of the world without the use of sedatives or the presence of psychosis:

Some, enraptured, have wisdom;
some, drunk, lose their mind.
Besides the sane and insane,
there is another tribe.

(D. S., Gh # 2509)

The wine I drank
from the invisible world,
was not made of grapes, it was not wine.
I walked the world of wisdom
and understanding alike.
The truth I found was only
in the intoxicated heart.

(Attributed to Molana)

I am using metaphors to draw the mind close to the meaning. I do not mean to compare the free souls of healthy people who shun worldly treasures and believe that "the face of this world is all tricky and inviting" with the unfortunate: "God will not shy away and will have no fear in bringing examples." (Koran Verse No. 25 Sura Baghareh). The *Mathnavi* and the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* are filled with metaphors. Molana, who never touched alcohol, speaks about wine, drunkenness and even psychosis, to express his zeal within:

Today there is wine, whirling, and music—
a drunken cupbearer and a righteous crowd.

(D. S., Gh # 2637)

Ah, the enemy of my mind,
intoxicating substance.
I am like a barrel.
You boil inside me.

(D. S., Gh # 2602)

Within the class of Gnostics, (except for Hossain Ebne Mansoor Halladje, who did not abandon his inner turmoil even at the time of his torture and death), I do not know of anyone who was as involved with his inner world as was Jallal ud Din Mohammad. Whatever is said about others is only a narrative; however the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* is a valid evidence of what has gone on in the imaginative soul of Jallal ud Din:

Life and soul have returned,
have come back to your doorstep.
All the gold in the treasury of Being
has materialized out of nothing.
My soul tried hard on its own—
it came back, burnt out,
it had failed.
Let the lovers scream in joy—
their Mecca of each prayer has returned.
The hawk of my soul had left you.
It heard your drum and returned.
Now the silent harp

plays a joyous tune.
Released from all its needs—
the ultimate coquetry has returned.
Leave your donkey-like body—
the king on his royal Boragh[2] has come back again.
The bright face of Shams-e Tabrizi
has brightened the world,
it has given away secrets...

(D. S., Gh # 709)

Another ghazal along the same lines:

Gracefully, that ray of light
moves about—
a nymph of paradise, walking dignified.
Night is wearing a bright white gown,
because elegantly, the moon is strolling around.
Give the good news to the drunks of the night,
the cupbearer is serving the drink of dawn.
Take a look at the seducer,
see how magnificently he arrives
one more time.
Such kindness, such zeal,
in the shape of Shams-e Tabrizi—
arrives like the blast of trumpet.

(D. S., Gh # 710)

Ghazals like the one below, which are actually very common in the *Divan-e Sham,* make us wonder how crowded Molana's mind was. It seems as if his soul has been triggered.

[2] Royal Boragh. The animal on which the Prophet Mohammad ascended to heaven.

He appears to be like a bird in captivity that slams itself against the sides of its cage and is unable to find an exit. The sound of wings colliding with bars creates an impression of bravery—not a like a heroic tale of bearers of clubs and swords, nor of holy bravery, but the kind that a proud individual manifests, being able to reach out of himself, his weak and limited self—to connect to an infinite source:

> If the soul of a lover speaks out,
> it will set the world on fire.
> It will explode this rootless world
> to nothing but tiny particles.
> The smoke will rise to the skies,
> there will be no people, no kings,
> and out of that smoke will erupt
> a flame to reach the highest sky.
> It will tear the sky apart,
> to where there is no place, no time.
> There will be such riot in this world,
> to warm up the mourners' hearts.
> Sometimes water extinguishes the fire,
> sometimes water itself is heated;
> sometimes the waves of the sea of non-existence
> become a grayish white.
> The sun is so pale
> next to the light from the human soul.
> Do not ask the strangers,
> what is going on inside.
> Mars will leave his manhood.
> Jupiter, the guru,
> will burn his books.
> The Moon will abandon its grace,

its wit turned to sorrow.
Saturn the planet of depression and ice
will fall into fire.
Mercury the speaker will be stuck in the mud.
Venus will have no enthusiasm, no stomach
to arrange her feasts of joy.
There will be no rain, no rainbow,
there will be no wine and no barrel.
There will be no joy, no ecstasy,
no wound for medicine to heal.
Water will no longer paint,
wind will no longer sweep.
Gardens will not celebrate,
clouds of April will have no rain.
There will be no pain, no treatment,
no enemies, no witnesses.
There will be no flute, no song,
neither will the harp play high and low.
The causes will remain forever,
the cupbearer will pour himself wine.
Get up and witness this.
The Divine artist is in action for the second time
about to paint peculiar designs
on the colorful clothes of the universe.
Here is the sun,
here is God,
and the heart rises in the East.
Every time the heart rises on this side
special sons are brought to life—
sons like the son of Abraham, Adham
and like the son of Mary,
Jesus Christ.

(D. S., Gh # 527)

Is this powerful being who repeatedly shows up in the *Divan-e Shams* and opens up Molana's language to bravery not that same infinite humanity, speaking from the hazy depths of condensed periods of time, saying, "I made fire, I made music, I enriched the soil with agriculture, with mathematics and geometry; I gained superiority over the planet earth, tamed electricity and split atoms?"

Although existing only in the imagination of Mohammad Jallal ud Din, a mysterious being with greater power shines, because it has been born from restricted matter and has reached for the infinite force. As Molana says, "Metal was put in fire and has itself assumed fire."

This human being, who is distant from whatever he has fallen into, this human who has departed from "six directions," roars in the *Divan-e Shams,* as if the Infinite Being were speaking to us in the language of the planet earth. He exclaims:

Fly in the invisible—
do not fly here,
my nimble bird.
My thinking, my perception,
go to the dark of unconsciousness.
This world is nothing but a drum
announcing the celebration of my wisdom.
The sky is nothing but a straw
from the stack of my crops.
What is a sea? Only a drop,
next to the shore of the soul.
Joy is not worth a drop with my sorrowful will.
Try to see me better now—

I am filled up with the water of life.
Have no suspicions, have no fear
of killing me, of my death, of my destruction.
I have wounded your heart.
Do not put medicine on my wound.
I have ripped up your clothes.
Do not sew up my tears.
Rabbits, quails and gazelles are the preys of kings.
Look at the male lions,
strapped up in my saddle.
If you are lazy, come,
drink a cup from God.
Mt. Ohod[3] will be shaking,
will fly up with my magic.
If Shams-e Tabrizi makes me the medicine one more time,
pure ambergris
will be envious of the condition of the soil.

(D. S., Gh # 1799)

The world of formation and decomposition in the presence of Absolute Wisdom—which can be named "the first emanate" or as the Sufis call it, "the holiest," or "the Nafas Al Rahman"—is only the beat of a drum. The beat of a drum is only a means by which to call the people to a festival of the Divine Wisdom.

In old times, there were vast grounds that were used for fairs during special festivals in large cities (similar to the fairgrounds of today). Molana portrays a drummer who is announcing such a festival and is inviting all people to

[3] Mt. Ohod. A red mountain near the city of Medina in Saudi Arabia, where Mohammad was once injured.

participate.

In relation to the feast taking place in the presence of the Infinite Wisdom the world of matter is like the drum announcing the festival. And the celestial sphere which our planet revolves around—this incredible sphere, with its mysterious galaxy compared to the infinite layers of sky—this metaphor, this being which potentiates the wine, is only a piece of straw. In the novel language of Jallal ud Din Mohammad, Gnostic matters are expressed in this manner, because in comparison with his abstract and mysterious inner world, the concrete world is small and insignificant:

> Beneath the wall of your body
> Is you,
> the jewel.
> The treasure will come out of hiding
> if you remove this wall from its midst.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2863)

VIII

Storm and Tranquility

The bird of my heart, again
wants to fly.
The parrot of my soul
craves the taste of sugar.
The mad, drunk camel of my mind
is breaking up the chains
one more time.
Fire from that reckless wine ran through my body,
my head and my eyes.
Love invaded my heart.
My heart ran away from everyone.
People are canes for eyes that do not see.
The blind man drops the cane
once he gains his sight.
Stop talking now, for the words
are making a web around your mind.

(D. S., Gh # 509)

We are like the strings of a harp—
we play both high and low
as we are tuned.

(D. S., Gh # 1671)

Now the storm. The clouds have formed in unknown diameters of being and are coming forth with maddening speed, the burning stroke of lightning tears them apart, yet they overwhelm the horizon of the soul with their gigantic shapes. The raging, disfigured elements destroy all order and all balance. The human being is in agony, he wants to set himself free, and begs for the release death can bring.

Romain Rolland

Somehow, among the fine writings of Romain Rolland, one of the most thoughtful writers of our time, the face of Jallal ud Din Mohammad appears.

In the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi,* the feeling that there is a storm moving within a vast spirit arises many times. This great collection, like the sea, is sometimes stormy and sometimes quietly dignified.

The intermittence of excitement and tranquility in the *Divan-e Shams* is so apparent and occurs so frequently that it convinces us there is a duality in Molana's mind. Can we assume that one of these two personalities belongs to the period before he encountered Shams-e Tabrizi and the other to the time after the warmth of Shams-e Tabrizi had touched him?

This hypothesis cannot be accepted in its entirety because there are many ghazals in this divan which terminate

with Shams' name and thus were definitely written after knowing Shams, yet are calm in mood; similarly there are many ghazals that do not mention Shams and were probably written before he appeared, nevertheless, they show the warmth in Molana's spirit.

Getting to know this unusual and extraordinary poet familiarizes us with a strongly affected and passionate soul, whose poetry is a reflection of this impressionability.

The fire that lifts Jallal ud Din off the ground and takes him to the peak of mystic fantasy where his poetry is much like the roar of a mysterious and unknown sea is not constant; but it is as if he himself was aware of this fact and described it as a periodic and temporary madness:

> One more time love invaded my home,
> once more, my spiteful camel broke its ties.
> It is the beginning of the month again,
> time to let go of sanity.
> Ah, all the knowledge I acquired—
> it was of no use at all.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 2064)

What about this "beginning of the month?" When did this wave of rapture overtake him? No one knows. But when there is love, Molana's senses are strong and sensitive; they are in touch with an unknown space filled with electricity. They naturally pick up signals and take on a voice:

> For the first three days
> at the beginning of each month,
> there is no question, my dear,

I have to go insane.
Whoever has love in his heart
is always repeating
the first days of the month.

(The Fifth Book of the Mathnavi)

Music has obviously played a major role in lifting Molana's spirit. His delicate senses were stimulated by music to bring about the rhythmic character of his poetry. The narratives telling how, during the nights of samaa, as music played Jallal ud Din Mohammad uttered poetry that his friends wrote, seem plausible. The style of the ghazals, the rhythmic order of their sentences, the coming of redifs and rhymes in repetitive stanzas and refrains sound as if a crowd were singing and repeating the last sentences together. Sometimes the lack of rhyme in each verse or the presence of a different rhyme in each verse confirms these narratives to the point that we can hear music while reading the poems and can picture the assembly of whirling dervishes, where the music excited Molana and he in turn imparted zeal and exultation to the music:

I am drunk with the wine of love,
Tana naha yahoo.
Released from this world and all,
Tana naha yahoo.
O music player,
for God's sake, be with me tonight!
I am completely drunk.
Tana naha yahoo.
Sometimes, I am destined to remain still,
sometimes, like the sky I am lucid and I run,

Tana naha yahoo.
What should I say?
I have the whole thing,
both the lucid and the stationary,
both the earth and the universe,
Tana naha yahoo.
I am destined, and destiny is made of me.
I have the power of both worlds,
Tana naha yahoo.
One by one, particle by particle,
they are all the rays of my light,
for I am the obvious sun shinning
Tana naha yahoo...

(Attributed to Molana)

O Taar player, play that last tune,
I am drunk with your music.
O generous cupbearer,
give me the cup of wine.
Hey you, you ultimate drunkard,
don't turn your head away in rage,
I might break many cups,
When I scream so loud.
You need not ask me who I am,
just give me the six-dimensioned cup.
Once I am drunk,
you shall see who I am, who I become.
Have no regard, no consideration,
let me drink from that wine.
For I have cut the vein of sorrow,
I have released myself from grief.
I have become drowned in existence,
for I have worshipped the wine.
What are you looking for,

why are you staring so hard?
I have escaped your vision,
I am the essence of your goodness,
I do what you have always done.
As you sat, I sat.
As you ate, I ate.
Be quiet if you are a seeker,
Thus Fana brings silence upon you.
If you have released me from being,
why do you drag me back into existence?

(D. S., Gh # 1605)

I am the inhabitant,
I am the house.
I am the trap,
I am the bait.
I am insane and sane,
I am happiness
I am the cry of justice
don't keep your distance,
don't keep your distance.
I am the slave.
I am free,
I am that sad one with a joyous heart—
don't keep your distance,
don't keep your distance.
I am the confessional,
I am the robe and the turban.
I am the priest, and the Zonnar,
don't keep your distance.
I am the wind, I am the trumpet,
I am close, I am far.
I am the connection, I hold myself aloof
don't keep your distance,

don't keep your distance.
I am the separation, I am the connection,
I am the main, I am the subordinate.
I am wisdom, I am tradition
don't keep your distance,
don't keep your distance.
I am the garden, I am the angel,
I am the fire, I am the light,
I am the flourishing heaven,
don't keep your distance,
don't keep your distance...

(Attributed to Molana)

The repetition of some of the verses from one ghazal to another with variations in some hemistiches and the addition or subtraction of some of the verses support my theory that music played a direct role in inspiring Molana's ghazals. Obviously Molana did not memorize his ghazals nor did he repeat them intentionally. If he had, he would have repeated them in the exact form. Repetitions also show up in various editions of the same ghazal. We may therefore naturally conclude that similar rhythms and music, or the environment of the samaa generated the same feelings in him and caused him to repeat the same ghazal. These ghazals were uttered in zeal and selflessness. Molana's sensitive nature, his intense and directed concentration and tendency to be overwhelmed by Divine thoughts made him prone to excitement since in anything—any movement, any sound—he saw the Absolute Being. Any rhythmical sound excited him. It is said that one day as he was crossing a bazaar, he started dancing with joy to the rhythmic sound of Salah ud Din Zarkub's hammer beating a piece of metal.

Aflakee writes, "One day Molana and a group of friends went on an outing. Molana went inside a mill. He was there for a long time. His friends were apprehensive and sent Sheik Sadreddin and Ghazi Serajeddin[1] to search for him. They found him whirling in front of the turning mill stone...." To their astonishment he was saying, "By God, this stone is talking, 'Sabooh Ghodoos." According to Aflakee, Sheik Sadreddin said he clearly heard the stone sing, "Sabooh Ghodoos,"[2] and Molana uttered this ghazal right there:

> Heart like a seed, we are the windmill—
> The windmill does not know the purpose of its turning.
> The body is like the stone.
> Thoughts are the water.
> The stone says, "Water knows why."
> Water says, "Ask the farmer, he should know.
> He is the one who directed the water to flow."
> The farmer tells you,
> "If all this doesn't happen,
> what would happen to the baker of bread?"
> This is a long story. Be silent.
> You should ask God.
> He will tell you why.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 181)

This narrative is a clear reflection of Molana's mental state. He has heard the mill stone say "Sabooh Ghodoos." Of course the rock did not speak. Whatever was said, came from inside Molana. The same idea is apparent in this ghazal:

---

[1] Sheik Sadreddin and Ghazi Serajeddin. Jurisprudents and literary men. They were students of Molana.

[2] Sabooh Ghodoos. A Holy pitcher containing the Holy wine.

There is something else, but talking about that
cannot come from me—
It should come from the Holy Spirit.
No, you are the one who says it,
you say it and you hear it too,
not me, not anyone else.
You are I myself.
It is as when you are dreaming,
you get to see yourself from within.
You hear yourself and assume
someone else is revealing secrets to you.
You are not just one, my friend;
you are the universe, you are the deep ocean.

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

This instrument was tuned and ready to play. Any stroke, any single touch would cause it to resonate, whether it was the skillful fingers of Shams-e Tabrizi or the repetitious sound of a millstone. Molana's soul, saturated with love and beauty, goodness and balance was constantly prone to excitement and fervor. Being with friends, longing to see them, reaching out for people in whose soul he saw beauty brought music to his words.

Jallal ud Din was the exact opposite of those aloof and dry-natured people who have no interests. The strings of their hearts are silent and motionless, no ray of love radiates from them to warm anyone else's heart. Like owls they are lonely and look at life with languor. From the book of life, they only read the dark pages about the people around them; they only see wickedness, and their pessimistic nature continuously discloses and magnifies evil. They do not see greatness, beauty or goodness and if they do, they degrade it. Jallal ud Din was a

pure soul, an optimist whose great forgiving heart bypassed evil and ugliness to spread love and kindness. He preferred the company of the people he loved to any luxury. It was the purity of his soul and his vivid mind that earned him the respect and honor of his contemporaries. Some of the fire and passion of the *Divan-e Shams* stems from this:

Here he is again in our assembly.
My eyes cannot see wrong: it is our friend, it is!
He is the loyal friend, he is—
he will never turn his back on us, never.
If he does, he is like a candle,
from every side he is in front, he is.
With the joy of his love,
the garden is filled with singing birds;
with the flower of his face
the pulps of the seeds are fragrant, yes they are.

(D. S., Gh # 466)

Come, come, and come one more time.
Don't cheat, don't cheat,
you cheating moon, come.
Look at the separated lover,
look at this exciting world,
look at the languishing drunk,
you king of the tavern, come.
You are the legs, you are the hands,
you are the force
in whatever there is, come.
You are the singing bird,
come to the garden.
You are the ears, you are the eyes,

you are the chosen one, come.
You are the kidnapped Joseph,
come to the market to be found, come.
You who are hidden from the vision,
you are the life of the universe;
one more time come dancing,
with no head, no turban, come.
You are the light of the day,
you are the joy that burns all the sorrows,
you are the moon that decorates the night,
you are the clouds bearing life, come.
You are the flag to the new world
no wisdom compares to yours,
don't come and go,
just get up and come!
Go away, disturbing night,
fade away, unspoken sorrow,
go away, O sleepy mind,
you, the sober treasure, come.
Come my wondering heart,
come my torn liver;
if the door is closed,
come, climb over the walls.
Come, the breath of Noah,
come, the desire of my soul,
come, the treatment for every pain,
come, the cure of every ill, come.

(D. S., Gh # 36)

Today we are happy and laughing,
our good fortune is arriving.
The king of our kings
is coming from the battle.
Drunk and elegantly I walk,

hidden as spirit we go,
as I ask for directions
to where the king is arriving.
Brighten up like the sky.
Freshen up like the green grass.
Swim like the fish do.
The Persian sea is arriving.
You have come again to ruin all homes,
shining on the ruins, you are the sun...

(D. S., Gh # 530)

We are back from the tavern drunk again;
we are freed from the ups and downs.
Ups and downs became our tavern too,
the barrel fell down and the cup broke.
When the Peer[3] saw all that excitement,
he went to the roof and jumped off.
The wine gets its zest from him,
existence goes and nonexistence becomes.
Where is the one who knows no difference
between any of this,
where is He?
He is drunk somewhere in the land of eternity.

(D. S., Gh # 516)

In addition to what we believe has affected Molana, there are other inner causes that are difficult to understand, since it is unclear what kinds of images passed through his incredible mind. What is certain, however, is that Jallal ud Din Mohammad never opened his mouth purposelessly. A stimulus always

[3] Peer. A Farsi word meaning "old." It usually refers to a wise man, a saint or leader of a sect.

touched him and led him to express himself. As it is said in the Koran, "He does not speak, but the words of God." Sometimes Molana speaks to verbalize a thought, and sometimes to express feelings, sometimes to lead and sometimes to just converse with himself.

When he is expressing a thought, he resides in tranquility. When he is expressing feelings, the rhythm of music and the arousal of a wandering soul are felt. For instance, scattered in *Divan-e Shams* there are ghazals regarding the ceremony of Hajj, where we might guess that external factors have affected their composition.

Jallal ud Din Mohammad was a religious man the way the prophets were: his belief was not pretentious or mere imitation; it was deeply rooted in his soul. What he says is not just pretense; there is not a trace of hypocrisy or dissimulation in his ideas. For that reason he fearlessly and frankly criticizes the practice of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

This courageous honesty stems from the strength of his belief, and there were indeed valid reasons for his criticism. For instance, the inquiry of a student, the reproach of those who use God's name to boast or the cruel people who oppress others and then seek to wash away their sins and buy respect through their trip to Mecca.

In these ghazals, the pure soul of a man who understood both the actual meaning of religion and had an awareness of the philosophy of prophecy and the Holy Book appear. Molana believes in guidance: leading others to the core of Mohammad's orders to cleanse their souls and enhance themselves with higher characteristics is a necessity of his life:

Hey! The caravan on the pilgrimage to Mecca
where are you? Where are you?
The beloved is right here, come, come!
Your beloved is the neighbor next door,
why do you wander the deserts, why?
If you see the face of the faceless beloved,
you will know,
you are the hajji you are the Mecca,
you are the Holy House too.
If your goal is to see the House of God,
first polish the mirrors, you will see the beloved.
If you have seen the garden,
where are your flowers?
Show us the pearl,
if you come from his sea.
No matter,
may your hard work repay.
May you find the treasure inside you.
You should know however:
you are what covers that treasure within.

(D. S., Gh # 648)

The ones who ran to see Mecca
finally reached it.
They had gone to see the House of God.
They searched and searched, but could not find it.
As they retired there for constant prayer,
they did hear a sound from God saying,
"You house worshippers,
why are you worshipping—
mud and rocks?
Go worship the House that the righteous seeks.
That House is your own heart,
your heart and your God are but one.

Bless the heart of those who crawled in that House..."

(Attributed to Molana)

Circumambulate the House of the heart,
if you have one.
The heart is the House of God,
don't assume that house is a piece of rock.
God will not accept you in if you break a heart.
Your heart is higher than the sky,
more than a tablet,
more than a pen that writes.
The treasure of God is hidden in the ruin of your heart—
that is where the treasures are hidden.
Be quiet. Don't attempt to describe your heart.
You will fail even if each strand of your hair
had two hundred tongues.

(D. S., Gh # 3104)

Sometimes Molana repeats the subject of one ghazal in another ghazals, but it is as though he were talking to himself. There is no intent to lead the reader nor have external factors stimulated his tongue. Moses says, "I became acquainted with that fire." (Koran, Ayat 7, Sura 27) and the reader can see the fire in Molana's spirit:

I existed in the days
when there were no names.
There was no sign of any named thing.
All the names and the named came from me,
on the day when there was no us or me.
I went to the tavern, to its door.
There was no apparent color.

Deliberately I went to the peak of Ghaaf.
There was only the place of the fantastic bird, Angha.
I pulled the reins of my desires towards Mecca.
There was no sign of the destiny of the seekers.
I looked up at the Two Bows' length,
I saw no sign of the higher court.
Then I looked inside my own heart,
and that is were I found it, not anywhere else.
Besides the pure soul Shams-e Tabrizi,
there was no other enraptured drunk.

(The above ghazal is not in the most trustworthy version of the Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi, the "*Great Divan*" edited and corrected by Furuzanfar. However, since it is present in other copies of the *Divan-e Shams*, is not attributed to another poet, and is in the first and second editions of this book I have left it as is.)

Molana's thoughts are twofold on the philosophy of fatalism. Jallal ud Din, like most of the mystics of Iran, has a fatalistic tendency, but in him it is in constant ebb and flow.

The delicate point is that this idea, which originates from two opposite poles in philosophy and religion, becomes a complicated and indistinct matter in the mystics' foggy minds. They start from a clear point, yet fall into diverse philosophical tendencies.

The whole of existence is a reflection of the infinite Being. That which exists is only shadows and images. Shadows and images have no will of their own:

Once in a while we assume
that we are the ones who do what is done.
This is also Your doing.
You are the source of our thinking.

(D. S., Gh # 2979)

This notion that we ourselves are willful subjects is also from "Him." Our deeds, if not directly from God's will, are so indirectly.

According to fatalists, our deeds, collectively, are the products of our being, the inevitable outcomes of the makeup of our brains and our minds.

Every time a black widow stings, God does not will it; however, the nature of the black widow is a creation of God and this necessitates the act of stinging. According to the Koran, "He does not alter nature, things are created the way they are." Thus, it is man's nature to take different directions: one individual is as Moses and another exists in the clothes of a Pharaoh. Man's nature is not his own creation, therefore man in effect cannot have a will of his own.

The sun shines through a stained-glass window. Inside, colorful rays of red, yellow, purple and green paint the house. The sun is the sun. Its rays are white and pure, "colorless as captive of colors," in essence there is no color but the sun's light.

The sun shines; warmth and light are a necessity of its existence, and it constantly sheds light. If one half of the planet earth is in darkness, the sun is not at fault; the earth turns and turns on a its axis. Thus, the entire surface cannot face the sun at once .

The sun shines, seawater evaporates and mist fills the air. We complain of the cold and the damp. Naively holding God responsible, we pray and beg for warmth. We either worship the sun or complain of its cruelty, yet the sun, oblivious to this worshipping and despair, sheds its light. The mystics fatalistic

view that "nothing exists outside of the will of the Absolute Being," is mixed with philosophical considerations. There is no good or evil. The world of existence should not be, except as pure goodness. Good and evil do not exist in an absolute form. Good and evil are relative and are created only in relation to our limited and insignificant minds: when the mouse is caught between the cat's teeth, the mouse makes a sound and suffers. This event is good for the cat and evil for the mouse but for existence itself—it means nothing.

This concept is brought up in the *Mathnavi* as a general issue, which shows Molana's incredible intellectual ability and the depth of his perception:

> The place of no place that has the light of God,
> has no past, present or future.
> The future and the past are relative to you,
> they are both the same and you assume them to be two.
> For some He is the Father, for us He is the Son,
> the ceiling of one is the floor for another.
> The relative up and down is all mixed.
> For him there is no up and down.
>
> (The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

A housewife calls a cat a thief: she hits the cat for stealing a piece of meat. Yet this woman's fellow humans hunt millions of animals to feed themselves and call it a blessing from God; and the animals that are caught by the humans see only evil from mankind.

As fatalistic thinking grows in the minds of the mystics, it approaches the naturalists' point of view that the world is

subdued by the unchangeable laws of nature. Then how do we interpret the asceticism of Adham,[4] the abstinence of Ba Yazeed, the sanctity of Sheik Abu Saiid, the deadly bliss of Halladje and this stormy love of Jallal ud Din? Are these spiritual conditions the result of some mysterious illumination, or are they the fusion of philosophical thoughts with strong religious beliefs and feelings, so that even men themselves cannot express their experiences in a clear manner and are unable to fit them into a positive philosophical system.

The clash of fatalistic religious men, the Ashaaries, with the Sufis is mostly over this matter: fatalism. The fatalism that originates in the mind of a spiritual man who assumes that God's will directs all of existence is mixed with philosophical thoughts to the point where all accountability is withdrawn, leaving neither a final goal for action nor any reason to believe in religious laws. With this kind of fatalism there are no obstacles for the expression of human instincts. This relative and temporary dispute in itself could turn human society into something worse than a burning hell and more horrifying than any jungle full of beasts and wild poisonous creatures.

It is obvious that the Gnostics do not want to reach this conclusion. Their heavenly path and the flight that takes their imagination towards beauty and goodness keeps them far from any indecency and evil—even the obscenities that ordinary societal law overlooks. They consider the truth to be the absolute source and they believe the more attention is paid to this source, the closer the human being is to God's Divine

[4] Adham. An Iranian 6th century Hejira poet from the city of Kashan.

characteristics and this in itself washes away all evil. But the black widow stings and the human body is in danger of its poison. Wise people believe that even if we do not hold the black widow responsible for stinging, we should destroy the spider in order to secure our health.

There is no end to this discussion and human kind has become confused with it, for a philosophical position that is difficult to overlook stands in contrast with the reality of life and the welfare of the society. Jallal ud Din was conscious of this contrast. With clarity he confesses:

> There is talk of fate and fatalism in my ghazals:
> let's overlook them both.
> Nothing but confusion
> arises from these two.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 545)

And precisely to avoid this evil, in the *Mathnavi* he approaches the same matter carefully as if he is completely aware of the role he is playing and the responsibility he has. He talks about will, but he follows the saying by Imam Ja'far Saadegh,[5] "not fatalism, and not will, but something in between," so that the followers of both schools of thought can equally refer to the *Mathnawai*. However, in the *Divan-e Shams* Molana loses this control. Here he leans mostly towards destiny. He frequently takes the issue lightly, but at times he does not:

> Why with such greed do you leave me,
> with no sleep, no food?

[5] Imam Ja'far Saadegh. The 6th Imam of the Shiite sect of Islam. Most Jurisprudents of the time were his disciples (died in 765).

Why do you hide and make me go to the mosque,
turn the water in my mouth into bitter poison, why?
frighten me and melt my courage, why?
convince me to go towards Hajj
but cut me short on the desert,
give away my camel and my clothes for Arabs to take?
Sometimes you dry up my crops and sometimes
you ruin them by flood.
If I run away from your trap,
you nail me down with an arrow.
If I run toward your decoy, you go to release me.
If I am polite, you tell me to go,
I am not drunk enough.
If I am to become impolite,
you lecture me on manners.
In resigning to God,
you claim "cause" to be your tradition.
In "cause,"
you blame me for using reason.

(D. S., Gh # 2883)

When my heart is light
you holler, hey! Jump!
When I withdraw in my heart,
sarcastically you tell me,
hey! you are dragging your anchor.
I laugh and you humiliate me,
you tell me: "you sound like the boards of a casket"
I cry and you ridicule, "You cry like a water jug."

(D. S., Gh # 2478)

Don't point out my crooked words.
If my words are crooked,

you are the pen that writes them.

(D. S., Gh # 3262)

Night and day, I seek you my God,
My eyes were closed while praying.
As I opened my eyes,
I found out that you are the seeker.

(D. S., Gh # 3209)

I am silent, yet
a shout comes out of my soul
in spite of my silence.
Whatever we do is done by the will of the Almighty,
like a sudden arrow released from the bow.

(D. S., Gh # 984)

You are the origin. Who am I?
I am a mirror in your hands.
Whatever you show, that I become.
I am the mirror and the examiner both.

(D. S., Gh # 1397)

Our soul is like Christ in the cradle of our body.
Where is Mother Mary to rock the cradle?
Our dead body is like the lifeless walls.
Where is the healing Christ
to give life to this body?
Where are the curtains to decorate the ceilings and the halls?
The spirit of lasciviousness is in battle with
the reproof of conscience, night and day.

What is triggering this war?
We are but a handful of dirt
in the powerful hands of the Creator.
Out of ignorance, we ask,
"Where is our master mud worker"?

(D. S., Gh # 2176)

In eloquence of words and concepts, the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* is not homogeneous. This is where its beauty resides. Like much that goes on with Jallal ud Din Mohammad, this variety makes him "list side to side like a ship without an anchor."

Sometimes he is calm and like other Gnostics develops his thoughts; with the use of allegory and approximations, he brings out first-born ideas because he has a powerful imagination:

Do you want to taste insanity?
Leave sorrow and leave thinking behind.
As long as you are worried about your clothes,
your soul will not fasten the golden belt.
Love will not have trust in you,
so far as you are tight with money.
Rise above it all to be a light.
If you are not up as a light,
you are down on the ground.
Firewood will remain only wood, if it does not burn.
Once set on fire, it burns; it is turned to flames instead.
It is only then that it deserves to be of the origin;
like the flames of the human soul it will reach eternity.
If not inside the eyes, collyrium is what it is called.
Once it enters the eyes, it becomes eyesight.
You come out of the womb; you don't learn to fly.
If you crack the egg of your body,

you not only fly, you take your soul along.
It is only one drop in this heavy cloud,
that drops in the sea
and turns into a costly pearl.
It was a black thorn, good for burning.
The fresh breeze of the morning
turned it into a lavish flower.

(D. S., Gh # 3363)

The peculiarity of their contents lead us to believe that Molana's daily observations have moved him and have stimulated his imaginative mind. In these instances there is not much excitement or movement in his poetry, but there is content and it is quite particular. In the ghazals below there is talk of flour and wheat. It appears that a mere observation has caused him to express himself:

My heart is as big as this world.
For that I am the bearer of heavy mountains.
Yes, I am the bearer of the heavy mountain,
not of the blades of straw.
If my hair has turned white like milk,
if I have become this old,
it is in desire of death for sure.
I am the flour; I am not the wheat,
why am I in this mill?
In the mill the newborn wheat goes,
born from the ear of corn;
I am the offspring of the moon,
why should I be under the millstone?
No, even if there is moonlight in the mill,
I will reach up towards its light,
not towards the bakery, where I'll not end up.

If ever I am paired with my wisdom,
I have so much to talk about.
Be quiet now, do not speak.
You don't want the morning breeze to hear.

(D. S., Gh # 8)

There is no exuberance in the ghazal above; the tranquility of rational matters is felt. In the following ghazal Molana talks about the innocence of the human self and that man must avoid prejudice and enslavement in order to be illuminated:

The mirror reflects the face of anyone,
because the mirror has no face.
A hundred times a day it reflects
beauty and evil to no avail.
The mirror has nothing against the ugly.
It does not desire the beautiful either.

(D. S., Gh # 681)

Sometimes we even feel the coldness of sermons, as in the ghazal below on fasting:

Behold!
The hidden pleasure of this vacuum of a stomach.
Man is like a harp, not more, not less.
If the vacuum of the harp is filled up,
the harp will not moan, not high, not low.
Keep this vacuum empty of food,
make music like the needy reed.
Leave the stomach empty;
tell secrets like a pen can do...

(D. S., Gh # 739)

Your hope tells me,
"Be patient, I will assist you with my wisdom."
Don't say that,
"trying is useless, things are as they will be."

(D. S., Gh # 716)

Why is a person being cruel today
when he will die tomorrow?
If you don't desire something to happen to you,
why do you try it out on someone else?

(D. S., Gh # 717)

Take a look at the animals,
how their heads are down.
If you are a human being,
you should hold your head up.

(D. S., Gh # 1876)

Pouring the sea over our head is useless.
We will never be filled up.
We will not be satisfied,
for you have turned the barrel of our being,
upside down.

(D. S., Gh # 193)

The breath of God has blown into your body.
You will deliver Jesus
if you ever give birth.

(D. S., Gh # 726)

Ah, cupbearer, give us the cup of wine,

let go of all this.
Make us all one; make us right.
We are now numbered, as individuals;
drown everyone in wine;
make us rid of numbers once and for all.
We are tasteless numbers. Give us a taste
unite us.

(D. S., Gh # 1642)

When he is not preaching, when Molana wants to express his feelings, (even though the ghazals are still filled with Gnostic contents) we hear music in his poetry as if it is "the beginning of the month," and "time for madness." Charming language, and smooth and familiar words and sentences are like the alternation of waves—organized and rhythmic:

O, the reputable Joseph,
how well you climb our walls.
You have broken our barrel,
you have torn up our trap.
You are the light, the joy, and the ruler of our world.
Put in a little yeast with our grapes,
turn them into intoxicating wine.
You are our final destiny;
you are the Mecca of our heart.
You have lit the incense of our being—
see the smoke coming out of our soul.
My heart is stuck in the mud.
I give my soul instead.
From the fire of love in our heart,
hallelujah, hallelujah...

(D. S., Gh # 4)

My heart abhors this world of color and odor,
It is running untamed from this side to that side.
My heart is screaming in despair,
where is the purpose, where is the element?
My heart is tearing off its clothes,
it is residing in the domain of the loyal.
You are not separate from my heart:
show your face, you are the mirror.
You are the source of love's riot
all sedition comes to you eventually.
Every moment a prophet comes our way,
pulls the neck of our soul in its direction.
The heart starts believing, with a hope,
perhaps you are there where it is being pulled.
If your body is buried in the ground,
your soul will fly to the sky.
If your clothes are torn with love
your soul will not be destroyed.

(D. S., Gh # 18)

Rise up!
Today the world is ours.
The spirit of the world is our guest today.
Today the spirit of life is serving us with wine.
In the heart and eyes of angels and the devil
lie the glory and pride of our king today.
The legendary Rostam and thousands like him,
are slaves and our toys this day.
Get up and see how today
the ruler of this world is generous
and will be at our service today.
Lucifer, the morning star, and the moon
both are celebrating our joy with daaf and music.

The bird of the soul is enraptured by flower garden.
That king of the domain of the heart and soul
is inside our disheveled heart today.
He has spiced our world and is hiding,
he is the spice and the purpose of our lives.
Like the salt in a pan and the soul in our body
he is hidden, yet most apparent to us.
Do not talk anymore of reasons and purpose
love is our reason and purpose silently.

(D. S., Gh # 504)

Go, go take the calm from the drunkards' hearts.
Go, go receive the revenues from the flowers in the garden.
Take off the hat from the head of the moon,
lift the hold off the flowers in the garden.
Last night you talked of the released soul.
This released soul is yours, it is yours, go claim it,
It's yours.

(D. S., Gh # 2023)

Look at that beauty,
how it has decorated the gardens.
Ah, smell the fragrance,
it makes us drunk.
What is all that? Where does it come from?

(D. S., Gh # 1879)

This is like a bowl of sugar;
this is an illusion in our mind.
It is the gold and the silver, this thing—
it is the easy and joyous, this thing.

(D. S., Gh # 1792)

The magnificence of Molana's work is clear when he speaks of delicate Gnostic matters, with the same zeal and rapture. The coldness of reasoning vanishes beneath a wave of lyrics. He talks about the secret of creation and paints it with colorful interpretations:

Does the smiling flower have a choice
but to smile so beautifully?
Can a bag of musk not smell like perfume?
Don't blame the pomegranate
for opening its mouth to laugh—
it does not fit inside its skin any more.
What can it do?
The shinning moon, besides goodness, and coquetry
has no other option. What could it look like? What else is
there to do?
If the sun did not give warmth and light,
what would it do in this noble sky?
Once you pass a dead body
it is resurrected.
Can it not come to life,
can it not move about, by your touch?
My heart with the strike of your love has turned to a harp—
if it does not roar and play
what else can it do?

(D. S., Gh # 835)

IX

The Vast Spirit

Where are the sparks of fire coming from?
Why is there smoke above the "melting pot"?
I am completely confused now—
where are all the opposing leaders coming from?
Are we not to leave prejudice behind?
Why are there scars of a war in my heart?
If we are united like links in a chain, hand in hand,
why the slamming of doors?
If a hundred doves live together in harmony,
why all the fallen feathers?
Cupbearer, bring out the wine!
Wine will know where all this is from.
Now I have no more doubt—
if you don't spill the wine on the ground,
the soil will not know where you have come from.

(D. S., Gh # 433)

Not till we reside in the beloved heart,
not till then, when we become a legend—
are we the endless story of hearts.

(D. S., Gh # 1649)

"Shakespeare knows no boundaries, no conditions, no literary obligations and no obstacles. He is a poet who introduces himself, gives, spreads, gives much of himself and yet never grows empty. He is always full and still he uses himself up. He is the consumer of genius. He has winds, clouds, mood swings and mysterious sources within. He leans on a breeze. He is filled with the essence of life. It is because of Shakespeare that birds sing, plants grow green, hearts love and souls ache. He is heat, coldness, nightfall, the passage of time, the whisper of the woods and the endless wings of dreams flying towards all things."

(Victor Hugo)

I read this passage in an article about Shakespeare written by Sharaf.[1] It immediately reminded me of Jallal ud Din Mohammad and I quickly made a note of it.

Hugo's eloquent, powerful language could be describing the rich spirit of Jallal ud Din Mohammad, who shared Shakespeare's incredible capacities.

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[1] Sharaf, Seyed Sharafeddin Khorasani. Born in 1927, writer and professor of drama at the University of Shahid Beheshti, Tehran.

Jallal ud Din Mohammad may have written more poems than any other poet: his poetry, quatrains, ghazals and Mathnavi (spiritual couplets) number about seventy thousand verses, whereas our longest book of poetry, the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, is a little more than 50 thousand verses. Besides, the major part of *Shahnaameh* is devoted to the narration of legendary historical myths. In other words, the *Shahnaameh* has an external subject. It mainly consists of narratives and ancient tales. Passages that express the poet's owns soul, where his ideas are developed and illustrated in a lively manner consist of the smaller part. What distinguishes Molana is not the volume of his work.

Undoubtedly, Jallal ud Din Mohammad is one of Iran's greatest poets and there is no question about his knowledge of jurisprudence, the traditions and sayings of Mohammad, the literature reviewing the Koran, literature in general and the philosophy and mysticism of his time. Also his knowledge of Iranian and Arabic poetry is well recognized. But his uniqueness does not lie in this knowledge either. Molana's distinction stems from the force of his untamed stormy spirit, from the vastness of his unconscious mind and from the world of images and dreams residing in his soul.

Despite their physical differences, men have many things in common. In spiritual matters and in the quality of their spirit, however, differences abound. It is difficult to see people as belonging to a single class or type: one person has "flown higher than the angels," and another crept lower than the reptiles. One is the source of light and knowledge and the other a world of

hatred and evil.

How can we compare Einstein and Gandhi with Lundro, the young man who put a bomb in his mother's suitcase to blow her up along with forty-eight other passengers so that he could collect her life insurance? We cannot even compare these two extraordinary men with a quiet and innocent Malaysian villager living a basic life, far away from the deliberations and knowledge of the world.

Unlike physical attributes, the essence of a human being—what shapes his thinking and his temperament—is not easily classifiable or definable. The evil of lusts hidden in his soul, and cravings that affect his perceptions, do not allow such categorizations or definitions. A human soul, like an impenetrable jungle or a deep sea is filled with mysteries, where storms and whirlwinds freely cause uproars. The minds and the deliberations of wise men are constantly challenged to shed light on these dark and unreachable parameters of the human soul. In reference to verse number 372 of Koran, Molana writes:

> If angels are hidden from our sight,
> human kind is a hundred times more deeply hidden.
> Man remains concealed, even to the wisest sage.
> Not even his closest relatives
> will know about him.
> He ever remains unknown.
> If the soul of a man is so hidden from our eyes
> the Holy Spirit will never come to sight.
>
> *(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)*

Religious laws and moral principles have tried to tame

this "Ahriman," this evil, to bring order and righteousness to society, yet they are far from successful. There is still plenty of deep and dense darkness—ugliness as well as beauty—hidden in society.

The distinguishing characteristic among poets, writers, and thinkers lies in their capability to reveal the mysteries of our souls.

Sometimes one strolls in a beautiful garden—a pleasant and refreshing garden planted by a skillful gardener. In it there are all kinds of fruit trees, trees that offer cool shade, neatly designed lawns and islets knitted with sunlight and shade and hills of flowers dotted with fountains. As one leisurely strolls in this garden, colors and shapes soothe the eyes and the garden's balanced variety enhances one's sense of life. There are no anxieties, no ambiguities to distress the heart.

There may be times, however, when instead of strolling in a garden one must journey through an old, dense vast uncultivated jungle. The powerful extravagant nature—strong and untamed—has created this jungle through the centuries. It is full; it is rich and unlimited—full of life and movement. Gigantic, disorderly trees stretch to the sky. Bushes, weeds and ivy tendrils leave no empty space; there is no trail, no sign, it is a jungle full of living creatures. There are fearsome wild animals full of noise and full of silence, tumults of birds and bugs and unknown creatures, full of mystery and shadows with enough light only to show the degree of the darkness.

Here is the difference between the spirit of Jallal ud Din and other poets. We can compare the collection of ghazals by

Saadi and the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* along this axis.

Within the vast horizon of Molana's being, clouds of different shapes appear. Every moment these shapes change, rays of sunlight play with the clouds, and our eyes never tire from the variety of shapes and colors. In this distant horizon, a ray of sunlight sometimes breaks through the clouds and sheds light on all of existence; at other times burning lightning tears the clouds apart and floods of rain cover the ground.

In Jallal ud Din's spirit, images come and go and whisper to each other. This place is never empty, it is always in a tumult, always in a riot allowing fresh images to emerge.

The scenes created in the *Divan-e Shams* that we usually do not understand (and therefore start interpreting in the hope that they reveal their secrets) are born from such a soul and are the reflection of these images. Here are a few such scenes:

> Yesterday among the lovers,
> the cupbearer and the musician were kings.
> We were struggling together; it was the day of mischief.
> Wisdom and prudence entered the flaming scene.
> How could wisdom and prudence exist in such heat?
> It is hard to believe.
> To hunt down the heartless, the eyes of a hundred souls
> were watching.
> From the bow of love, hundreds and thousands of arrows
> were released.
> I saw a gazelle running there like a dragon.
> Compared to him, the lions themselves were mere prey.
> There was an old man, a holy man—
> his eyes were like a bowl of blood,
> his hair as white as milk.

I saw the gazelle bounding towards him—
the wheel of the universe was coming apart.
This whole scene was miraculous indeed.
The bowl of the sun and the moon exploded in a holler.
Here the wine was taking effect.
I asked one of the holy spirits, what is happening?
He said, "I am confused. The old man must have caused a miracle."
Shams-e Tabrizi, you know how I feel.
As God is my witness, I am innocent.
I have no arms, no heart, and no will.

(D. S., Gh # 732)

The master has come down with a disease
since the middle of the night, last night.
He has been hitting his head against the wall.
The sky and the earth are crying,
he is so sick and sobbing.
His breath is burning as if he were on fire.
It is very strange indeed.
He is sick but has no fever, no headache.
This is not an earthly disease; it has come from the heavens.
When he saw Galen,[2] the physician took his pulse and said,
"Let go of his hand, look right into his heart.
His suffering is not from an ordinary malady.
He has no biliousness, no melancholy,
no colic and no dropsy.
Everyone in this city is mourning his illness;
he does not sleep, he does not eat,

[2] Galen, Claudius (c 130 - c 201 B.C.) Served as Marcus Aurelius's physician. His most lasting medical technique was the taking of the pulse. Known as the 8th physician.

he is just being fed by love from within.
This love for the master is both a nanny and mother."
I said, "God help him to calm down for at least one hour.
He has never killed anybody,
never took anyone's money."
An answer came from the sky,
"Leave him the way he is.
When one is in love
medicine and treatment are no blessings..."

(D. S., Gh # 321)

Another beautiful scene:

Bless the day when we sit in the balcony, you and I.
With two forms, two faces
you and I—but in a single soul.
The stars of the sky come to visit us.
We show them the sun and the moon,
together you and I.
All the birds in the sky come to take their sugar,
as you and I open our mouths in sweet laughter.
When we come to the garden, you and I,
the green grass and the songs birds sing,
will cause the water of life to flow—
shower us with immortality.
You and I without our bodies,
happy and carefree.
How strange!
In one shape, you and I,
and in one moment—
one of us in Khorasan[3], the other in Iraq—

[3] Khorasan. A large Eastern province of Iran. Before Islam, it included Nishapur, Balkh, Marve, Tus, and Herat.

you and I.

(D. S., Gh # 2214)

And another:

I went to the doctor of souls.
I told him to examine my hand.
I have lost my heart and am ill,
I'm in love and I am drunk.
He said, "Didn't you die?"
I said, "Yes I did, but when I smelled your presence,
I came out of the grave."
That holy face, that rising bright sun,
that Josef of Kannon
for whom I cut my hand,
came very gently to me,
put his hand on my stomach,
and asked me, "Which group are you from?"
I said I am from this hand.
As I started to holler,
he reached for my hand and gave me a cup of wine.
That wine warmed my pale face.
I stopped my screaming then.
I drank a hundred cups.
With each cup,
a secret was revealed.
I threw down a hundred cups.
I broke a hundred barrels.
Still that holy king
kept on whispering a song.
With his kingly manner
he was pulling me up
from down here, from being this low.
I depend on you, my soul,

I am drunk with you.
If I am the arrow and the thumb,
I am completely at your command.
If tired, I am tired for you,
if drunk,
I am drunk by you.
If I am low, I am low because of you.
If I am, it is because of you.
You brought me to whirling,
now I am completely drunk.
Now that you've closed the barrel,
I will close my mouth.

(D. S., Gh # 1447)

What is charming, unusual, awesome and deserves consideration and worship is the depth of Molana's intellect. This is far more important than his different style or method of writing. Preferring one style to another is a matter of the reader's taste. The capacity of Shakespeare's and Goethe's minds is solid, timeless and valuable and distinguishes them from others.

Voltaire and Rousseau have the same gift. Dostoyevsky's writing is a mirror of his revolutionary soul. Proust's neighborhoods in south Germany were a creation of his mind. *Jean Christopher* is the story of Romiane Rolland's soul, liberated from the constraints of racial and religious prejudice. Balzac's creativity and Hugo's strong nature was a consequence of their imaginative minds and Nietzsche's Zarathustra lived in the spirit of Nietzsche.

The genius of Khayyam with all his eloquence lies not

only in his strong style, but also in the power of perception that reflect his honest spirit. The difference between his quatrains and those of hundreds of others, who imitated or repeated him or unknowingly mixed their verses with his quatrains, is that Khayyam's words mirror his mysterious mind; they reflect an image of existence as he saw it.

Ferdowsi is much praised because with his unique collection of historical poems, he revitalized Iran and saved her from the danger of being overthrown and of drowning under the flood of pride and the grandeur of strangers. His writing was more influential among intellectuals in sustaining a nation of Iranians than the sword of Ardeshir Babakan[4] and Nadder's [5] triumphs. The significance of Ferdowsi lies in his great spirit, and the *Shahnaameh* and the creation of Iran's historical myths are a reflection of that spirit. The legendary love scenes, scenes of pride, courage, manhood, the admiration of beauty and the hatred of evil—all these are a reflection of Ferdowsi's great soul. The *Shahnaameh's* heroes are born out of the vast and rich mind of this Iranian poet of Tus[6].

The value of Nezami's narratives is not based solely on the narratives themselves. What gives them real value are his thoughts and imagination. Like a mirror, the tales reflect Nezami's bright face.

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[4] Ardeshir Babakan. The founder of the Sassanid Dynasty. He ruled Persia for 44 years. During his time Persia became the most powerful empire in the world.

[5] Nadder. Founder of the Afshar Dynasty in January of 1736. He was known for his bravery and many triumphs.

[6] Tus. A major city in Khorasan, the birthplace of Ferdowsi and site of many legends in the *Shahnaameh.*

The glory and respect lavished on Sanai and Attar stem from the power of their thinking and the incredible heights to which the souls of these two elite poets fly. They observed and felt things that were hidden from hundreds of other poets.

Men of knowledge prefer Nasser Khosrow to Farukhy Sistani; the latter is one of our best poets due to his delicate use of words and rhythm, but the former uses poetry to express his thoughts and not to make a living. Nasser Khosrow's superior nature, his ambitions and his attention to spirituality, put him on a higher plane than the rest of the literati in the Mahmud Ghazna dynasty.

There was a time when painting an accurate portrait was considered perfection. A picture was perfect when it showed nature the way it was.

But human perfectionism was not satisfied with the mere imitation of nature. It asked the painter and the sculptor to project into their creation a ray of characteristics and qualities belonging to the subject, without interfering with the subject's actual appearance. Still, the careful observers of art looked for something else. They wanted to see through the artist's eyes the perspective from which he saw his subject and the effect that the subject had upon him. What became important and valuable was no longer merely copying a subject, but the emergence of the secrets of the artist's soul. This is more apparent in the art of poetry and writing: there is an unbreakable tie between writers and their work. The stronger their imagination, the more that brightness is apparent in their work. That is why great artists cannot escape the sovereignty of their genius. Their attempt to

express themselves is the struggle to communicate what lies in the hidden corners of their mysterious minds. This point is most apparent in the works of writers and poets such as Edgar Alan Poe, Franz Kafka, Butler, Rimbaud and Dostoyevsky. Hafez is right:

> The story of love is only one.
> It makes me wonder
> whoever it comes from—
> it is never repeated—
> even once.
>
> (Hafez, Gh # 39)

Thus a story of love, contrary to what we may think, is not just a beautiful tale. It is the narrative of our soul, the story of our lost and tempestuous soul and its voyage through the mysterious spheres of human emotions; a story of the blind instincts and crazy dreams that have brought us "wise" creatures to struggle and to despicableness. Therefore, whoever has a longer tale with greater variety, more complications, more untamed and wild incidents and more obscure and entangled destinies—becomes a more distinguished writer and will have a greater audience. Such authors attract people who look for mysteries and secrets and may enjoy solving mathematical puzzles and problems. This is what distinguishes Jallal ud Din Mohammad from other poets. The story of his soul is without an end; the uproar of his mysterious inner world is unceasing; the story of his heart is as long as eternity, "like the tale of the heart, [it] has no beginning and no end."

Molana is the poet of poets. The seventy thousand verses of the *Mathnavi* and the *Divan-e Shams* comprise and reveal the tale of his wandering soul.

The concepts he articulates are not ordinary or fashionable and cannot be learned. In these two books, Molana's soul is wide-open. A variety of colors exist in a space filled with clouds, wind, stars, thunder and lightning. The knowledge he has acquired is only a means for reflecting these thoughts. His work undeniably reflects his life—especially the *Divan-e Shams*. At any moment an incident or an observation might become a pretext for bringing out what boils within him.

In referring to Molana's ghazal below, Aflakee, who sometimes degraded his poems, wrote:

> "One day his Excellency Molana was at a crossroads preaching. A large crowd had gathered. He had turned his head towards the wall and preached until dusk, the time for the evening prayer. When night fell, all the dogs in the neighborhood gathered around him. He was looking sharply at them and preaching. They wagged their tails and their heads and gently grumbled. He said, 'These dogs understand my words. From now on do not call them dogs; call them the Seven Sleepers.[7]

> 'The lions of the world were bowing
> when the Seven Sleepers' dog awoke.'
>
> *(The First Book of the Mathnavi)*

---

[7] The Seven Sleepers, or the Keepers of the Cave. They were seven people and one dog that escaped the cruelty of King Jalinoos. God put them to sleep for one-hundred years. They woke up after a hundred years, and went back to sleep until judgement day.

And these walls that are worshipers of God understand the secrets.

'You need eyes to see Life,
sticking his head through the wall.
The doors and the walls have so much to tell us.
The fire, the water, and the soil are narrators of the tales.'

(D. S., Gh # 1158)

Suddenly the disciples appeared from everywhere; his Excellency commanded this:

'Come, come, spring is here!
Come, come, the Beloved is here!
Bring the whole world, bring all the souls,
serenade them to the sun,
he has drawn his sword.
Laugh at the ugly one, who hesitates,
cry for the lovers
who are disappointed with love.
Watch out!
The whole town.
The crazy one is on the loose one more time.
What is this day, what is it?
It resembles the Judgment Day.
Our records of deeds have flown in from the skies.
Hit the drums and say no more,
there is no room for the wisdom and the heart,
in a place where the soul has run...'"

(D. S., Gh # 329)

We do not know the extent of the validity of these narratives. It is hard to trust them, especially when one considers the shortcomings of recorded history and the style in which it is written. However, what is undeniable is an inference that can be

drawn from different poems in the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* that many of the ghazals were uttered in a particular condition that Molana had been experiencing. Some sort of discovery or illumination forced him to speak. Whatever inspired him came from within; we look in vain for an external factor.

The French call people who are so affected by their imagination, "illuminé," indicating a certain selflessness and ignorance of the outside world, as if in their subconscious mind an image temporarily appeares, or a bright light goes on—a light that leads them to see things that do not exist in the outside world. That is why what they say in that moment is incomprehensible to other people:

Yes, from the crack in the door,
I see the bright light of your face.
From that hidden fire,
I lit a hundred candles.

(D. S., Gh # 1463)

My consciousness—eat your heart out,
every moment of every hour!
I will drink a barrel of wine with no cupbearer, no cup.
Without any skill, with no gimmick,
I will catch the heavenly birds, the friends of God.
Better yet, unusual birds will grow out of the palms of
my own hands.
Wine will boil out of my own lips
when I am drunk like this.

(D. S., Gh # 328)

Hear this word of advice from me.
If you don't want to lose face,
don't open me up—
I am a pot of opium.

(D. S., Gh # 89)

I am so drunk today,
I have jumped out of myself.
My love, take my hands and pull me out
to the place where you are.

(D. S., Gh # 2618)

Cupbearer, one cannot be in love without wine.
The smell of your wine is making me dizzy.
Where is the cup of wine?

(D. S., Gh # 2207)

Give me a cup of fiery red wine,
give it to me without mercy,
so I can be lost forever,
so that I lose my mind.

(D. S., Gh # 191)

May the veins of life be cut from my body,
if those veins are conscious in spite of your love.

(D. S., Gh # 1054)

In this condition, Jallal ud Din is like a drowning man struggling and trying to reach out to anything, even a straw—any interpretation or allegory—to save him:

O child—in the tavern of my heart
there are so many thoughts.
All mixed up, all dropping down, like drunkards.
(D. S., Gh # 1098)

It is to express these feelings that sometimes his verses seem unfamiliar to our ears and our perception, or seem to lack eloquence:

Behold, I am at your door, open up the door.
Closing the door is not a sign of joy.
No—this is not I; it is actually you at the door.
Give way; open the door onto yourself.
A matchstick has come to join the fire.
"I-You" says, "Come out to me my beloved,
my face might not be yours,
but it fades away in the eternal soul."
The fire responded "I-You, I am coming out,
why should I cover my face from myself and I, why?"
(D. S., Gh # 250)

The above ghazal, lacks eloquence and fire, and peculiarly expresses the following concepts: variety in appearance does not necessarily imply difference in origin; and when a configuration disappears only one reality remain. In Molana's opinion the universe reflects the different shades of one single reality—one pure light going through a colorful glass window. Molana uses allegorical images such as a match and a fire to express these concepts. Perhaps an actual match or fire inspired him to compose such a ghazal.

The ghazal below is also peculiar. It starts with a reference to a public bath and its design, then progresses to a subject that constantly occupies Molana. Ghazals like this one have different themes, but all conclude with Gnostic thoughts and an attention to metaphysics. They support the assumption that small observations and occurrences—even insignificant daily chores—can serve as keys to open a window on Molana's soul.

Rarely does the bath keeper come out of solitude.
Behold him when he does.
The engravings on the walls salute him.
These depressing dead designs come to life.
The bath keeper's ears give them hearing.
Their ears are now interested in hearing tales.
The bath keeper's eyes give them sight;
the reflection of his eyes
shows the narcissus of their eyes.
Look at the figures on the wall—
how they dance—they are drunk now.
They have joined the feast;
they are drinking red wine.
See that design on the wall,
laughing, going from this wall to that wall?
All faces rush now to see the Divine face,
but the bath keeper does not show them his face.
Hold your basket up to Him.
Let it be filled by Him, of Him.
Your basket would make King Sanjar envious.[8]
What took place there is unspeakable,

[8] King Sanjar. A king of the Seljuq Truks who invaded Iran in 1045. He was known for his great generosity.

how can a pen write it down?
Dip the pen in black ink.
It is still unable to speak.

(D. S., Gh # 809)

In their variety, some of the ghazals of the *Divan-e Shams* resemble an antique shop. In such a shop you can find things that do not exist in any market; it offers no ordinary common goods. Each object in the shop was made during a particular period, sometimes centuries ago. Each has been touched by the dreams and tastes of the people who have admired them. A good imagination could create a story for each and every object: this inlaid worked cabinet, that ivory box, this beautiful and precious Chinese vase, painted by a skillful artist. Dreams and desires have inspired the artists to create them. For years they have been the possession of the rich and have passed under the gaze of envious or admiring eyes. In their density of content and the rarity of the thoughts expressed in them many ghazals in the *Divan-e Sham,* resemble an antique store.

The length of the ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams* sometimes reach forty to sixty verses (the average ghazal is about fifteen verses). The length of Molana's poems is a necessity because the poet has so much in his heart: "In the ruins of my heart there are so many thoughts." When Molana's thoughts, "falling on each other like drunkards," appear in his ghazals with no attention to order, this disorderliness and unconventional style impart a touch of the wilderness, like the wild and remote mountains where the variety in scenery and the diversity of nature do not allow boredom. It is as if measure and

rhyme were a steep road down which Molana is unable to control himself—or could it be that the enthusiasm of his disciples induces him to speak?

> Once you close your mouth,
> you will not like the silence.
> The zeal and enthusiasm of friends
> do not allow one to remain taciturn.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 404)

For instance, the ghazal below is eighteen verses long and starts with a holy myth:

> I am back like new year's day,
> to break the locks of my jail.
> To break the teeth and the jaw
> of this man-eating wheel of a universe.
> Being released
> from the bow of the eternal king
> I am there to hunt—
> the parrot-killer, owl...
>
> (D. S., Gh # 1375)

Soon, other subjects follow: suddenly we read three noble verses in an entirely different manner of language: the language of the Gnostics, or the whispering accents of the Sufis who see nothing but the will of God, in matter, existence and decay. Then the poem refers to predestination in a language that is closer to daily life and, therefore, more pleasant and easier to understand:

When you allowed me entry to your house,
you knew I was totally drunk.
Should you not have known
that a drunk is not accountable for what he does?
He might break this and break that—
or since you are giving charity
and you have invited me in as a guest,
why are you punishing me
for breaking a piece of bread?
No, no—
at your table, I am the guest of honor,
I will drink a glass or two
to make your other guests feel at home.

(D. S., Gh # 1375)

A human being is born full of lusts. His thirsty instincts search for water; water with its charming glitter is spread before his eyes. When a drunken man—a very drunken man—breaks a dish, he cannot be held responsible because he has no control over himself. Besides, would a generous host ever be mean to his guests, or would he mind if his guest eats something off the table? Since the world of Being itself is his feast, indulging in this feast to satisfy basic instincts should not be punishable. Such thoughts as these give warmth and charm to Molana's language.

The richness of content, his incredible imagination, and his undeniable command of language, provide this variety of meaning in Molana's language, making it symbolic and at times complicated to the point that digesting it is difficult and overwhelming for readers who are used to the ordinary. Even for people who have entered the tavern of his heart and are familiar

with his intoxicating thoughts, some of these thoughts remain very strange:

Even though we are not deep in the sea,
we are as precious as pearls.
Even if not on the battle field,
we are the ones with dignity.
Whether or not you choose to give me wine,
from the wine I tasted the night before,
it matters no longer to me,
drinking or not,
we are already drunk.
O love, you are so beautiful,
you are the purest, strongest wine.
If our gold and our treasure were stolen,
it wouldn't be a loss.
We are in the gold mine, we have all we want.
You who taunt us all the time,
you who open your mouth to us,
yes to you, immature taunters,
we are much drunker than you know.
Gypsies, with no gold, no money,
with no inheritance,
will certainly steal, will they not?
—Steal and always be asking,
"Now we are gypsies;
we have no other job,
no vocations;
we are hungry now,
as we eat off Moslem men.
Where else should we eat when we're hungry?
If we took the basket,
instead we threw the dates on the ground.

If we drank from the Nile,
we are instead the cones of sugar."

(D. S., Gh # 1026)

What is the motive behind the last lines of this ghazal? What is Molana indicating? What does he want to say? Is the ascetic, abstemious Jallal ud Din proclaiming the core of libertarianism or elements of socialism? Has some incident occurred, is he making an excuse for sinful humanity or is he simply criticizing social policy? Whatever is the case, there must be a fire here, and we see its smoke. The ghazals in the *Divan-e Shams* are the smoke rising from the fire inside Jallal ud Din's soul. We cannot guess what has brought him to utter these strange verses. He himself cannot figure it out at times and is completely astonished:

I am lost; I am lost.
I am like a lost child.
I don't know these streets.
I am lost in the bazaar.

(D. S., Gh # 1439)

Blaming myself constantly,
that I am too large for my body:
I no longer fit into my own being.
If one's head out grows the turban,
should one go without it?

(D. S., Gh # 1429)

This heart, vast as a sea,

these waves that come and go—
as thoughts,
they bubble in despair.
Who are you in love with?
Which jewel has stolen this heart?

(D. S., Gh # 3026)

It is too late. I am drowned now.
How can I describe the qualities of Jayhoon?
When my head was still out of water,
my mouth went bragging about its virtues.

(D. S., Gh # 3386)

You ask me, "How you are?"
What do I know?
"Who are you, where are you from?"
I do not know.
"What are you so happy about?
What did you have to drink?"
I do not know.
"What does he have in his mouth
that makes him talk so sweetly?"
I do not know.
"What does he offer that is better than life,
better than youth."
I do not know.
"If I am you,
then who are you yourself?
You are this or you are that."
I do not know.

And there are times that this astonishment turns into certainty:

Last night in my dreams, he came,
he came to visit my ailing heart.
I asked him, "Who are you, and who am I?"
He said, "I am your existence, you are just a mask."
I said, "You are you and I am also you."
He said, "Now you have understood."

(D. S., Gh # 1544)

Then Molana is calm, is comforted and is released from the universe:

The reflection of the eastern sun
is eating me up like a shadow,
even though we all are
in the shape of one universe.

(D. S., Gh # 2379)

It is in such a condition that Molana understands what the "dervish," who is most likely Shams-e Tabrizi, is saying:

I asked a dervish,
"Look!
Why is the back of the sky bent?"
He said, "We do not bother
with any of that—
Who he is, or what he has."

(D. S., Gh # 701)

Some dervishes may reach the point where they say:

When the moon sheds light on the night
the darkness all dissolves.

Hundreds of my kind and yours
dissolve in the light of unity.

(Attributed to Molana)

They no longer need to fuss about science and philosophy. According to the *Mathnavi*:

Once a man achieves his purpose,
the middleman is dismissed.
When you reach your goal,
going after knowledge,
you need search no longer.
Once you have reached the rooftop of the skies,
searching for ladders is not appropriate.

(The Third Book of the Mathnavi)

Altogether, the *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi* shows us that Jallal ud Din Mohammad is one of those unique thinkers who are captives of their own soul; poetry is a struggle on their part to free themselves from the pressure of thoughts, and in that struggle they forget themselves.

Now that I am ending these notes, in order to better conclude them and to get closer to achieving my original purpose, I have chosen to resort to Molana and to end this book by quoting various verses from the one who imparted so much warmth to this writing:

What did my heart eat last night
that made it so high?
Who saw the salt shaker? Why am I so full of spice?
Whatever I pour, whatever I break today,

I am exempt.
Whatever I say,
Whatever I do today, I am not at fault.
With each breath, I have the aroma of the beloved,
so my beloved does not complain
for being away from his lover.
If you put your lips on mine you will get drunk.
Test me and see: I am no less than the wine grape.
At night, at the time of sleep,
I take off these clothes.
I get up in the morning and still have them on
The drink is here again to take me for free.
The cupbearer is here to take me with him to the tavern.
If the soil eats up my body in one gulp,
my soul will fly to the sky, for I am light.
I am not of matter.
I cannot adopt the name of Pharaoh:
it is too fat; it would fill up my mouth
I will assume the soul of Moses, for I am as thin as a string.

(D. S., Gh # 1629)

The writer of these verses is the same one who says in the *Mathnavi*:

As the colorless became the captive of color,
Jews started to fight.
Once you disregard the color in between
Moses and Pharaoh become friends.

(The First Book of the Mathnavi)

Philosophically, Molana does not see good or evil in the universe: "There is no absolute evil in the world." Pharaoh and Moses are different faces of the material world:

Good and bad, wet and dry,
all have come from One.
In nature good and evil are mixed.

(D. S., Gh # 810)

When we look through stained glass, we see the light in different colors; otherwise the sunlight is the sunlight; it has no specific hue. In the world of existence and decay, however, Moses and Pharaoh do exist and they are not the same. Even though the sunlight is white and pure, inside the house, looking through the colorful glass window, the rays are in different colors and their shades are not all equally beautiful and agreeable. They create different effects. One who seeks the sun and its pure light, but has no access to its purity, prefers the ray shining through the yellow glass to the one breaking through the black. One seeks the ray that is closest to real sunlight:

The moments you are conscious,
the beloved is a thorn in your skin.
When you are selfless and drunk,
what is the use of the loved one?
While conscious,
you are like the clouds and filled with sorrow.
When you are unconsciousness,
the moon draws near you.
When you are aware of yourself,
The beloved stays away.
When you are unconscious,
wine over you.
All your restlessness

is in search of contentment—
seek restlessness instead,
watch peace come upon you.
All indigestion
consists of desire for food.
If you abandon the joy of eating,
even poison will taste good to you.
Fall in love with the beloved's oppression
instead of his kindness,
so the coquettish beloved,
will come to you as your miserable lover.

(D. S., Gh # 323)

We are from above,
to the above we go.
We are from the sea,
the sea is where we end up.
We are not from here or from there,
we are from nowhere,
and that is where we go.
We are Noah's Ark in the storm of our soul,
that is why we go with no legs and no arms.
Like a wave we have come out of ourselves,
like a wave,
we go back inside to see ourselves from within.
Our star does not orbit the moon,
so we fly above the Pleiades.
O my words, be quiet, come with us,
see how we go with envy, without us.
Friends, friends, I am friends with your passion.
Till I grew too close to you,
I was weary of everyone else.
The wheel of the universe told me,

I am tired of your turning.
I said this point has made me turn like a compass.
I hear uproar from the dome of the heart.
Touched by the style of the heart,
I became a turning turret.
Once I had seen his cup,
I became the lord of the ruffians.
Once I saw his hat,
I lost my head and my turban.
At times resembling lilies searching for flowers,
I became a poet, I wrote allegories.
Sometimes like the morning canary,
I was ridiculed for my repetitions.

(D. S., Gh # 1674)

Because of that wine, I know not where I am now;
I am at the place of no place.
I know not my location.
At times, I fall in the deepest depth of the sea;
at others, I rise like the sun.
Goodness was drunk and said,
"I am calamity, I am calamity, I am calamity."
The answer came from two hundred souls,
"I am yours, I am yours, I am yours."
You ask me, why I don't come.
If you show yourself to me,
I myself will come. My own self will come.
I said, "Shams-e Tabrizi was heard saying,
'I am you, I am you, I am you.'"

(D. S., Gh # 1526)

Do not go viewing the view:

you are what we are watching.
You are the visible world and beyond.
Do not postpone union or separation till tomorrow.
You are today and tomorrow.
Leave this "I," or "we," do not be afraid.
You are the king, with us or without us.
You are carefree in crowds—
you are a crowd yourself:
you are with the crowd
without the crowd,
and solitude also is you.
If I talk about you till the Judgment Day,
I will never reach the end.
You are the entire way.

(D. S., Gh # 3341)

I resemble the sun and the sea,
each one alternately.
Inside I own a sky,
I have the planet earth outside.
Within the barrel of this world
I fly like a busy bee.
Don't just look at my sorrow,
I have a honey cone inside.

(D. S., Gh # 1426)

Thank God we have skipped the battle.
We escaped this domain of twists and turns.
We got rid of this life of fear and worry.
We escaped this tricky, torturing wheel.
The visible creator decorated the world,
now we need no creator, no slave and no idols.

This year is such a good year,
we skipped the story of the beloved
and the sorrow of the year before too.
In love we passed the thirty days,
and the forty days of mourning.
Now that the idol is here,
we've gotten rid of the wanting.

(D. S., Gh # 1478)

My beloved sarcastically asks me:
Why have you fallen in the middle of the road?
My beloved, with the wine you gave me,
why shouldn't I fall?
I am very drunk, but I am a little sober—
enough to see that you have taken my mind
to put it right beside you.
I swear to your eyes,
which are the cupbearers of love,
you give me the wine,
but you hold on to the cup,
what a great master you are.
It is your generosity
to allow the wine to take away my mind.
If I were conscious and could think,
I would explode with ecstasy.

(D. S., Gh # 2845)

Our bodies, empty of us at nights,
fill with us in the daytime.
Like cats,
whose bag are we hiding in?
Each one clapping, exclaiming, "My soul, my soul!"

The One who makes hands clap—
where is he hiding? Within whose soul?

(D. S., Gh # 432)

A sugar dealer brought us good news:
a caravan of sugar was arriving from Egypt.
Oh God, what a delicate cargo—
hundreds of camels loaded with sugar.
This was as if a candle were lit in the dark of the night—
life breathed into a corpse.
Heart was so light to hear the news,
it ran to take the ladder of wisdom to climb the roof,
to find a trace of what was told.
Suddenly I saw from the roof,
a world outside of this world.
The sea was all in one barrel,
the face of the earth was the blue sky.
On the throne was sitting a king,
the king was wearing a soldier's uniform.
A garden as infinite as paradise,
was inside a gardener's chest.
I beg this image not to leave my mind.
This way, once in a while, I can breathe.

(D. S., Gh # 2730)

Pulling you out of one fire,
I threw you in another.
Coming out of my heart as words,
I swallowed you as I did my words.
You are with me,
but have no news of me.
With magic I put you out of sight,

so no evil might lay eyes on you.
I punished you; I hurt you,
but my honorable hands
will bring fortune for you in your destiny.

(D. S., Gh # 173)

My beloved pulled my ears and said,
"You are ours tonight, come."
"Yes my love, but only if you show me where you are.
If you trick me like this,
if you steal the stars from the sky,
if you steal the wisdom from the mind,
how can I obey you?
You have denied me sleep,
please do not deny me being drunk.
You have separated me from everyone.
Now give me separation from myself."

(D. S., Gh # 2839)

Sometimes, like a beautiful idol,
you come to the door of my heart at night.
Sometimes, out of my dark body,
you come out as the morning light.

(D. S., Gh # 2571)

Understand this:
The world is like a book.
All the rules of life are hidden inside.
You are the opening chapter of this book.
Understand this!

(D. S., Gh # 40)

Suddenly the one I was seeking for years
was sitting with my heart and chatting.

(Attributed to Molana)

You have come to reveal my secret to everyone.
You have come to tell on the hiding king,
to show where he is residing.
Last night his dream came to me with a glass of wine in hand.
I said, "I don't drink."
He said, "You will regret it, you will miss out."
I said, "I am afraid if I drink—
shame will leave my head,
and I will reach for your hair.
Then you might turn away from me."
In me he saw coquetry.
He said,
"What kind of a person are you?
Now that I have come to you
why are you denying?
If you go as I lead you,
you will hit the target precisely.
You will be able to bend the wheel of universe,
use it as a bow for your arrow.
I am the treasure in the heart of earth,
why do you put your head on the ground?
I am the Mecca of the sky,
Why do you hold your head up?"

(D. S., Gh # 2465)

This variety, this creativity that we do not see in any other poet is generated by Molana's rich soul. His deep belief,

that has become an uproar has made his work most daring: his impossible leap towards reality has held his existence beyond any obstacle.

> The supreme wisdom that kept a secret,
> is drunk and the secret is revealed.
>
> (D. S., Gh # 812)

Molana's purpose is to seek the "Prime Wisdom," or in neo-Platonist theory, the "First Creator." Jallal ud Din longs to see the premier obstacle vanish. He wants the curtain covering the ultimate light to be drawn aside; for absolute light, without a medium to shine on humans without there being nine skies between the absolute light and the human soul. Of course this is too much to ask, yet his wild love is his excuse. Immeasurable love does not know any limits.

What is beautifully unique in Jallal ud Din is this extraordinary love—a love without reservation, a love which is the axis of all the tumult in his soul, a love which has not been provoked by any need nor stimulated by fear or hope; desire towards an unknown source, a blazing fire:

> I desire grape wine,
> I desire someone to share my wine.
> I smelled the aroma of Halladje,
> I want the wine of Masud from the cupbearer.
> Come next to me cupbearer, today,
> I desire to be away from myself.
> Allow me in into your eyes,
> I desire to be hidden from the eyes of others.

For a moment, take your hands off your face.
I desire heaven and angels today.
I close my eyes to the light of the sun,
I desire the brighter face of you.
If you are the healer of weak hearts,
it would make sense to desire myself, ill.
If you give life to dead bodies,
it would make sense if I wished for the grave.

(D. S., Gh # 1545)

If we measure this leap of Molana's soul against what we know and understand, we see a certain radiance: the essence of God is incomprehensible; neither our physical senses can find the way to it, nor our inner senses. Therefore, we must surmise that this fire and rapture that struck in Molana and caused a chaos in his soul—is directed towards God:

Every particle existing in this world
attracts its own kind, just like amber and straw.

(The Sixth Book of the Mathnavi)

Molana's spirit is cleansed from basic needs. He has rid himself from animal instincts. His light and pure soul has reached for the heavens. This is the secret of his indifference to death, since it was a path to the source:

I do know
Death leads me to the beloved
If you know of a shorter way,
Let me know, now!

(Attributed to Molana)

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The Divan-e Shams is a sea.
Its calm is serene and its agitation awesome.
Like the sea, it is made of waves and motion.
Like the sea, it is a profusion of colors:
once green, then blue, purple
and the color of water lilies.
Like the sea, it is a mirror to the sky
reflecting the sun, the moon, the stars
and the shadowy designs of dusk within itself.
Like the sea, it is full of movement and life.
Beneath its smooth and calm surface
there exists a world of passion and turmoil.
The Divan-e Shams is not merely a book of verse;
rather it is the sound of the sea in a howling gale.
The Divan-eh Shams is the image
of an uneasy soul that is at once filled with excitement
and intoxicated with passion and charm.

Ali Dashti